



"MAULANA JALALUDDIN RUMI AND KABIR A COMPARATIVE STUDY"

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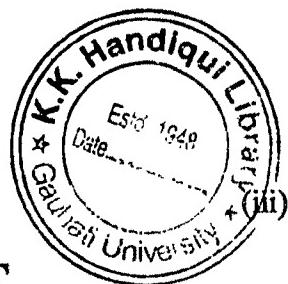


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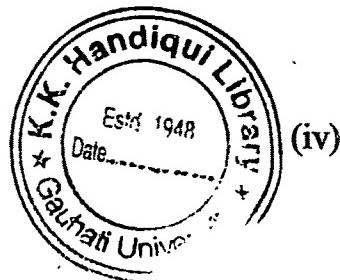
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Begum Ayesha Sultana Laskar.
(Begum Ayesha Sultana Laskar)



PREFACE

The present work "*Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi and Kabir-A Comparative Study*" is an endeavor to bring into light the essence of two great mystic and Sufi poets Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi and Kabir.

Kabir's poetry is a reflection of his philosophy about life. His writings were mainly based on the concept of reincarnation and karma. Kabir's philosophy about life was very clear-cut. He believed in living life in a very simplistic manner. He had a strong faith in the concept of oneness of God. The basic idea was to spread the message that whether you chant the name of Hindu God or Muslim God, the fact is that there is only one God who is the creator of this beautiful world.

Jalaluddin Muhammad Balkhi is one of the greatest philosopher poets that the world has ever seen and besides this, he is a mystic par excellence. He valued his poetic gift as a means of spreading his theosophical ideas and his spiritual experiences. The philosophy of Maulana Rumis, like the philosophy of all the sufis starts from the conception that not only True Being, but Beauty and Goodness being exclusively to God, though they are manifested in a thousand mirrors in the phenomenal world. God in short is pure Being, and what is "other than God" only exists in so far as Being is infused into it, or mirrored in it.

Sufism is all about the spiritual relation between the Asheq and Mashuq that is men and the almighty God. The same thing had been approached as the pure and divine between the Atma and Paramatma in Bhakti cult. The basic meaning of both

Islam and Hinduism is universal brotherhood. Significance of Humanism and Universal brotherhood is the theme of my research which I do consider as the most challenging criteria for the peaceful existence of human being in this world of 21st century.

I do hereby admit that I took up this theme for my research work considering the basic need of it and tried my level best to do justice to the theme of the research work. I have visited to different libraries all over the country in search of source materials related to my research work. I found it very hard not to rely upon some of the very reliable and outstanding secondary sources the impact of which can easily be trace in my research work.

This thesis is divided into four main chapters; each chapter consists of some sub- chapters. A brief sketch of each chapter has been shown bellow.

CHAPTER-I:

In the first Chapter I have made an effort to portrait the personalities of Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi and Kabir. There is hardly any doubt in the fact that Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi, well known by his title, Maulavi, is the most outstanding Sufi poet whom Persia have ever produced. He was born in Balkh in September 1207 A.D. but became famous as Rumi because he passed most of his life in Konya, in Asia Minor, which was known to Islamic World as Rum in those days. His father Mohammad bin Hussain al Bakri, commonly known as Bahauddin

Walād, was a great Islamic Scholar and source of imitation. Maulana spent forty three years in writing his Masnawi which consists of 26,000 couplets and is divided into six books. The Masnawi has been hailed as a unique revelation of esoteric truth. The Masnawi of Jalaluddin Rumi deserves to rank among the great poems of all time. It is an encyclopedia or rather the Bible of Sufism. The UNESCO had declared the year 2007 as the Maulana Rumi Year. Numerous Seminars, Symposiums and Talks held all over the world co-memorizing the 800th birth anniversary of Maulana Rumi. Besides all these I have discussed many other things relating to the personality of great Sufi saint in this chapter.

Accordingly Kabir Das who was one of the chief exponents of the Bhakti movement in India occupies the second part of my chapter one. Kabir was born in 1398 A.D. to a Brahmin widow who threw him near a tank; he was picked up by a weaver, Nirk and his wife Nima. They brought him up with the greatest care. He became a disciple of the celebrated Hindu ascetic, Ramananda. Kabir through his verses (Dohas) expounded the philosophy that, 'God is the root of all manifestations, "material" and "spiritual". According to him God is the only need of man. In the second part of the first chapter I have tried my best to highlight almost all the aspects of sant Kabi's personality.

CHAPTER-II

The second chapter is entitled "Socio-religious Studies of their respective age". In this chapter emphasis has been laid given to highlight the socio-religious

movement that prevailed in the whole Islamic world which was known as Islamic Mysticism or Sufism. Sufism is that mode of religious life in Islam in which the emphasis is placed, not so much on the performances of external rituals as on the activities of the inner self. The philosophy of Sufism believes on one God and regards every individual and everything else as part of him. On the other hand Bhakta Kabir illuminated a century back after Maulana Rumi. The Indian Sub-Continent was dominated by the Muslims both socially and politically. Thus Sufism penetrated into India and influenced the doctrine of Hinduism. As a result the Bhakti cult developed in Hinduism. These kind of socio-religious factors in the time of both Rumi and Kabir in two different geographical locations will be discussed in the second chapter of my thesis.

CHAPTER-III

The third chapter is entitled as "Sufism and Bhakti: similarity and dissimilarity". The sufistic literature produced by Persian poets like Attar, Saadi, Iraqi, Rumi, and Hafiz etc. supplied warm fund of sufistic tradition, philosophy and thought to Indian mystics and poets of different languages. The moral and spiritual sensibility of the above poets inspired generation after generation of poets and Sufis of India resulting the appearance of good number of mystical literature in different Indian languages. In this chapter efforts have been made to point out the differences which exist between these two religious movements of the medieval age in the form of Sufism and Bhakti movement.

CHAPTER- IV

The fourth chapter is entitled as "A Comparative Study of Philosophy of Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi and kabir". This chapter will be considered to be the back-bone of the proposed thesis. Considering this fact I have divided this chapter into four sub-chapters. In the first sub-chapter entitled "Concepts of God", I have discussed the perception of God from the point of view of both Sufism and Bhakti. The second sub- chapter is "Perception of Asheq and Mashuq/ Atma and Paramatma. Sufism is all about Ishqe Haqiqi (the spiritual relation between the Asheq and Mashuq) that is men and the almighty God. The same thing had been approached as the pure and divine between the Atma and Paramatma in Bhakti cult. The third one is "Meaning of religion". Here discussions have been made on the basic meaning of both Islam and Hinduism. In the fourth sub-chapter titled "Significance of Humanism and Universal brotherhood." The theme itself is a unique one, as Humanism and Universal brotherhood is the most challenging criteria for the peaceful co-existence of human being in this world of 21st century where every one is running behind the money leaving minimum stander of humanism.

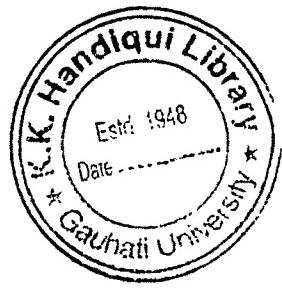


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CHAPTER -I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Personality of Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi

1.2 Personality of Kabir

INTRODUCTION

The essence of all major religions is to reach God, or the Truth, or the Absolute Reality. All the religions are like different rivers flowing into the Sea. They may have different ways, but their destination is the same. In this context, Maulana Rumi and Sant Kabir's messages are extremely relevant as it can feed a dearth of spiritualism at present experienced by mankind. Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi heralded the cause of Sufism at a time when the Mongol hordes had wreaked havoc in Asia and people were groping in the dark and striving arduously in search of truth and realization. Consequences arrived at by him, and the findings made by him, were based on his personal experiments rather than on theoretical knowledge in the field of realization. His personal experience of this truth inspired the great mystical revival in Iran and the Anatolian Peninsula. He was acclaimed as the resuscitator of the dormant Divinity of man by realizing which humanity throughout the world could be brought into one orbit of one family of God. He delivered a message of hope, love, faith, brotherhood, fellowship, amity, understanding, peace and charity throughout the world.

Likewise, Kabir was the first preacher of prominence to foster a spirit of unity among the Hindus and the Muslims. People liked the moral message in his song which poured out from his heart. He boldly condemned image worship in temples and mechanical prayers in mosques but also fought against superstitions, ritualism and cast-system. His mysticism is mainly based on three aspects, his concept of God or Brahma, his concept of soul or Atma, and his concept of Maya or the world as illusions. "The cult of Tawhid dominated him, his discerning eye completely gave

up any consideration for the pupil caring for externals, and began to speak without the veil. The superficial people linked him with heresy, but the agnostics with inner light considered him as sincere Muahid." According to him there was one God who could be described by various names, called him Ram, Rahim, Allah, Khuda, Hari, Govind, but he is one. He calls "Brahman the prime, principle or the essence. It is beyond time, space, qualities attributes. It is unaffected by any change, neither to the left nor to the right, nor in front, neither below not above, formless."

The spiritual preaching's of Kabir uplifted the oppressed humanity and gave strength to stand up on their feet and fight against all religion, social and political inequalities, and created a new universalism and culture based on oneness of ultimate reality, brotherhood of mankind irrespective of their racial, ethnic, linguistic or cultural differences. Kabir, by his vision of one humanity, which transcended all distinction of cast, creed, race, religion and country, inspired mankind to treat all human being as equal and with love and compassion. And apostle of peace and love, his response to the disharmony and chaos of the time in which he lived when religious intolerance was the real menace, was that of a spiritual reformer. His message both to Hindus and Muslims was one of humanity, religious tolerance and good will.

1.1 Personality of Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi

Jalaluddin Muhammad, with whom the epithet Mawlana (our master) has acquired a unique meaning, was born on the 30th of September, 1207 in Balkh, currently situated in northern Afghanistan. Maulana Jalaluddin is also known to the world simply as Rumi, meaning from Roman Anatolia because Anatolia used to be called the “land of Rum (Romans)”. Balkh, one of the principal cities of a region holding pivotal importance in the Anatolia tradition, that is to say Khorasan, was occupied, at the time of his birth, khawarzmshahs, and previously by the Seljuques and Ghaznavides. The Ghories, beginning from 1198, had briefly occupied the city, prior to the capture of it by Khawarzmshahs in 1206, after which emerged the ensuing Mongolian threat.¹

His father's name was Bahauddin. Bahauddin was a man of great learning and piety, an eloquent preacher and distinguished professor. Unfortunately, not content with declaiming against the philosophers and rationalist of the day, he seems to have indulged in political diatribes. According to Aflaki, he attacked the ‘innovations’ of the reigning monarchs, Muhammad Qutbuddin Khwarazmshah, surnamed Takash, who held in the North-East of Persia in Transoxiana. Another account depicts the king as jealous of his growing influence and popularity.² Also perhaps because he predicted the Mongol invasion he found it convenient to quit Balkh with his family and a few friends (about 607 A.H.) At Nishapur the

1. <http://book.google.co.in/books?id=BuU3HBW-rFoc@dq=sufism>

2. Selected Poems from the Divani Shams Tabrizi, by R.A.Nicholson, p.xvi

travelers were met by the famous Sufi Fariduddin Attar, who gave Jalal at this time a mere child, his Asrar Nama (books of mysteries) and prophesied that he would attain the highest pitch of spiritual eminence. From Nishapur they went to Baghdad, where they received the news of destruction of Balkh by Chenghis Khan (608A.H.), then to Mecca, Damascus, Malatia (Melitene). Four years were spent at Arzanjan in Armenia, and seven at Laranda.

Baha walad Sultan al Ulama (king of the learned), was a notable scholar of theology with an appreciation of Sufism. His early ancestors were jurist and religious leaders. Thus early in his life Rumi came under the authoritarian image of his ancestral family, especially his father. Rumi's father adhered strongly to traditional Islamic values, even when they conflicted with the powerful court of 'Ala-al- Din Kharazmshah. Ordinary people respected him as a spiritual leader but he gained the dislike of many intellectuals who acquiesced to the central authority,¹ and then by Burhanuddin Muhaqqiq Tirmidhi, who was a pupil of Bahauddin at Balkh. Burhan-al-Din of Tirmidhi was well known Sufi in Khorasan, visited Rumi and offered himself as a guide in understanding classical Sufism. Rumi accepted the offer and associated with Burhan-al-Din for nine years. In the first three years he increased his knowledge and changed his own mental and behavioural status. He spent the next four years in travelling alone and with his guide to other well known Sufi centres. Lastly, he became further acquainted with the behavioural and contemplative steps of Sufism. On his

1. Rumi the Persian, the Sufi, by A.Reza Areseh, p 30-33

fathers death (628 A.H) Jalal succeeded to the vacant chair.¹

He also founded an order of Darvishes known as Maulavis, where he authorised music and religious dance. When asked why he introduced singing and dance at a funeral, such practice being contrary to custom, Jalal replied: "when the human spirit, after years of imprisonment in the case and dungeon of the body, is at length set free, and wings its flight to the source from where it come, is not this an occasion for rejoicings, thanks and dancing?" Jalal was an indomitable optimist. In his sayings, and still more in his poetry, we find an almost untrammelled ecstasy. The religious dances, known as Riza Kuli, may in same way account for Jalal's occasional lack of care displayed in his poetry, and also for the author not for removed from insanity. We are informed by Daulat Shah that "there was a pillar in the Maulavis house, and when he was drowned in the ocean of love he used to take hold of that pillar and set himself turning round it." It was while turning round the pillar that he frequently dictated much of his poetry. As Mr. Arthur Symens has sung:

I turn until my sense,

Dizzied with waves of air,

Sons to paint intense,

And spires and centres there.²

1. Selected Poems from The Divani Shams Tabriz, By R.A. Nicholson, p xv

2. Rumi the Persian Mystics, by F. Hadland Davis, p 33

After the death of Sheikh Burhanuddin of Tirimidh he received further esoteric teaching from Shams-i- Tabriz, a "weird figure", as Mr. Nicholson calls him, "wrapped in coarse black fleet, who fits across the stage for a moment and disappears tragically enough".¹

Even his parentage is uncertain, some declare that his father, Khawand Ala uddin claimed descent from Kiya Buzurgumid. Ala'uddin abandoned his ancestral sect (the Ismailis), burned their books and tracts, preached Islam in the stronghold of heresy, and privately sent Shams'uddin, a youth of rare beauty, to receive his education at Tabriz. According to others he was born in Tabriz, where his father carried on the trade of a cloth merchant. He is said to have studied under Baba Kand Jundi, Abu Bakr sila – Baf, and Rukunuddin Sanjari. He had travelled much, where he obtained the sobriquet, Paranda (the Flier).

His character was despotic and overbearing, he was extremely bitter in his sermons, and likened his learned auditors to oxen and asses. Perhaps this may be the cause why Dr. Sprenger calls him "a most disgusting cynic". He was comparatively illiterate but his tremendous spiritual enthusiasm, based on the conviction that he was a chosen organ and mouth- piece of Deity, cast a spell over all who entered the enchanted circle of his power. In this respect ,and in many other, for examples, in his strong passions, his poverty and his violent that, Shamsi Tabriz curiously resembles Socrates; both imposed themselves upon men of genius, who gave their crude ideas artistic expressions , both proclaim the

1. Literary History of Persia, by E.G. Browne, p 516

futility of external knowledge the need of illumination, the value of love; but wild raptures and arrogant defiance of every human law can ill atone for the lack of that ‘sweet reasonableness’ and moral grandeur which distinguish the sage from the devotee.¹

We have sufficient evidence to prove that Jalal’s nom de guerre was an actual person, and not a mythical creation on the part of the poet. This mysterious being who fitted across Jalal’s life so tragically, seems to have had great personal influence over the poet.²

Aflaki informs us: Shamsuddin demanded and received the obedience due to a Sultan from the meanest of his slaves. To quote the vivid words of Riza kuli, he (Jalal) was so transported and smitten, that for a time he was thought insane. He renounced his teachings, and retired with Shams to solitary and desert places, where in close communication they discussed the deepest arcane of mystical philosophy.³

The pretension of Shamsi Tabriz himself may be judged by an anecdote in the *Manaqib-i’l Arifin*. One day a person met him in the market place and exclaimed, “there is no God, save God; Shamsuddin is the opposite of God.” The people on hearing this, raised a great hubbub and wished to kill him, but Shams intervened and led him away, remarking, “my good friend, my name is Muhammad. Thou

1. Selected Poems from The Divani Shamsi Tabrizi, by R.A. Nicholson, pxx

2. Rumi the Persian Mystics, by F. Hadland Davis, p 34

3. Selected Poems from the Divani Shamsi Tabrizi, by R.A. Nicholson, pxxiii

shouldst have shouted, 'Muhammad is apostle of god.' The rabble will not take gold that is not coined!"¹

The scholars of Jalal looked upon the whole affairs as an unworthy infatuation on the part of their master, and on the part of Shams a shameful seduction. Their protests brought about the flight of Shams, who fled to Tabriz. But it was only a momentary separation. Jalal followed this strange figure and brought him back again. Most of his lighter poetry was composed during this separation. Another disturbance however, caused the departure of Shams to Damascus. We then have no clear record of him. Various legends, exist in regard to the death of this mysterious person. It may be safely stated that Shams met with a violent death, the exact nature of which it is impossible to say definitely.²

Shams of Tabriz, son of Ali, the son of Malakdal, and twenty two years Rumi's senior, came from a family whose forbearers were Ismailis. Though information about his early life is not readily available, it is known that he received his training in Sufism under the master, Abu Jabbil Baf, a basket weaver in his native city. (It should be noted that almost all great Sufi's earned their living through productivity available in their simple culture.) Apparently, Shams attained a state of being in which his guide could no longer help him unfold the mysteries of life. Then, like Socrates, Shams heard his perfected voice- that of a fully integrated man. He began to travel and question the most learned scholars to discover if his

1. Selected Poems from the Divani Shams Tabrizi, by R.A. Nicholson, pxxii

2. Rumi the Persian Mystics, by F. Hadland Davis, p 35

voice was genuine. The evidence suggest that he became aware of the limitations of conventional life and even revolted against classical Sufism, which offer the individual knowledge of its principles and identification with either God or the saints. He freed himself from all kinds of authority, internal and external, and frequently criticised traditional scholars and theologians who merely repeated others opinions, rather than take others as his example, he turned inward to discover his real self. Out of his travelling and self imposed exile he finally attained perfection. After years of unsuccessfully seeking a congenial soul he at last met Rumi whom he found to be his own potential soul.¹

This strange union is by no means unique in the history of world literature. The union, however, in this particular case is extremely difficult to rightly fathom. We may reasonably infer that Jalal's intense poetic temperament became fascinated by the dogmatic and powerful Shams. The very treatment of this friendship, both in the lyrical poems and in the *Masnawi* is Sufi. The two following quotations, from many that might be cited, will prove sufficient to illustrate this point:

The face of Shamsuddin Tabrizi's glory, is the sun.

In whose track the cloud-like hearts are moving.

O Shams Tabriz, beauty and glory of the horizons,

What king but is a beggar of thee with heart and soul.²

1. Rumi the Persian the Sufi, A Reza Arresteh, p.37

2. Rumi the Persian Mystics, by F. Hadland Davis, p 3

Shams qualities could only be described by a person who had undergone an identical experience and had the ability to objectify that experience. Such a man was Rumi himself who dedicated to Shams one of his major works, Diwan-i-Shams, the expression of a total personality. Its 2500 odes occurred spontaneously, and even its mere seems to match the human heart beat.

In a group of odes in which Rumi tries to identify himself with Sham's image there is further evidence of Sham's character, although Rumi admits that words do not fully describe him. He presents Shams as a free man, a magnetic, universal man, and one who understands an ocean of symbols beneath the inward state. Shams is the secret of secrets, or the light of illumination. To Shams love, though it is the life – giver is nothing, for a stream of love emerges from his own ocean of kindness. God like, he is the creative truth united with all, and one who has solved the subject-object relations. To Rumi, Shams was one who knew unity behind plurality and how the unity turned to plurality. Sham's was fully aware and experienced life in all existence and all essence of life. Being the same inside and outside, Shams was like a flower whose petals were identical on both sides: Shams was an unfolding of mankind in the memory of the universe in evolution. He had achieved happiness, experienced joy and had ceased to search, for he had passed the state of search and now stood at the threshold of the world of Form. He was the illuminist who had withdrawn the veil of name and perceived matter. Tearing aside the veils of attributes and qualities he had finally found in the evolution of the phenomenal world. He had passed from existence to non existence and beyond it. He lived in such a state that he needed no laws, no

religion, he lacked any sense of guilt and justice; truth and kindness marked his spontaneous acts. When he came in contact with his fellow human beings Shams was the remedy to all ills. He was peerless no one had seen anyone like him, nor did anyone possess his magnetic personality no one equalled his ability as a guide; no one possessed his wisdom. Rumi describes Sham's influence thus.

"When he stimulated method from the depth of my psychic sea, the phantom of light arose, Shams the light of the eye, the clarity of reason, the brightness of the soul and the enlightenment of the heart. Shams was a universal man who took away my reason and religion. He was the form of every happiness."

In Maqalat Rumi relates that Shams, in order to reinforce his quest, conveyed the secret of his attainment to him, and in the Diwan he presents Shams as a man who spoke very little. Indeed, his first advice to Rumi was to keep silent and to remain deaf externally so that insight could act. The Maqalat, which presumably reports the first few month of their meetings, presents Shams as a man of clarity, sincerity, simplicity and maturity. In this discourse the characters are God, Rumi and Shams. They discuss the realities behind the beliefs, the real and the unreal; they agree that man's ideas are behind both living and non living things.¹

The meeting between Rumi and Shams is not only the most important occasion with regards to the transformation of Rumi's inner life, but is at the same time the most dramatic incident recorded in authentic history and corroborated by numerous contemporary sources. As was to be expected in such a rare and

1. Rumi the Persian the Sufi, A Reza Areseh, pp.38-40

perhaps unprecedented case, the poetic and fanciful imagination of some of the narrators and interpreters has woven a veil of legends around the incidents, so much so, that quite a few of the students of Rumi have been inclined to regard the contact and association between the two, as a mere illusion of the psyche and have expressed doubts whether Shams was actually somebody of consequence or merely a convenient of Rumi's own mind.

Despite numerous accounts that have come down to us, an unexclaimed mystery surrounds the meeting of Rumi with Shams, but what actually happened as a consequence of that meeting is no secret. The fire emanating from the eyes of Shams burnt down to ashes the book of speculative thought of Rumi, the philosopher. The sage and theologian was, all of sudden, transported from the world of word (Qul) to the realms of ecstatic experience (Hal).¹

Rumi is at his best in the Diwan. Here he excels himself as a poet. Most of the 3500 odes and the 2000 quatrains that he wrote must have been sung in the nocturnal sessions in which he led members of the Mevlavi order in an ecstatic dance. Reminiscent of these intimate and animated sessions is a beautiful ode addressed to the musicians in whom Rumi invokes the blessings of God. The musician has a role to play in the life of a mystic and Rumi is so grateful for the helping spiritual communication that he pleads passionately for this class which was generally looked down upon by the people.

God bless the musicians, he says, with the sweetness of honey, and gives their

1. Life and Works of Lalal-ud din Rumi, by Afzal Iqbal, p. 164

hands strength to play on the instruments. They are devoted to love and deserve their rightful place of honour. Their melody has helped revive many drooping heart; why then, should they not receive the recognition due to their merits in a loving tributes to the companions who contributed so significantly to the Sama evenings. Rumi says:

خدایا مطربان را انگیین ده

برای ضرب دست آهین ده

چو دست و پای وقت عشق کرند

تو همچنان دست و پای راستین ده

چو پر کرند گوش ناز پیغام

تو شان صد چشم بخت شاه بین ده

کبوتر وار نالاند در عشق

تو شان از لطف خود برج حصین ده¹

Dance and music have a important place in Rumi's scheme of things but removed from the context of contemplation, they cease to sublimate, and infact tends to be abused as a mere instrument of satisfying one's carnal desires. Rumi is aware of this danger and warns against indiscriminate use of the fine arts by the vulgar and the uninitiated. In their hands Sama becomes a mockery and a

1. Life and Works of Jalal-ud din Rumi, by Afzal Iqbal, p. 164

meaningless exercise.

سماع آرام جان زندگانست

کسی داند که او را جان جاست

سماع آنجا بکن کانجا عروسيست

نه در ماتم که ان جای خفانست

کسی کو جوهر خود را ندیدست

کسی کان ماه از چشمش نهانست

چنین کس را سماع و نف چه باید

سماع از بهر وصل دلستانست¹

Rumi is no rhymester. He does not consciously sit down to write a poem. He does not gather his tools about in a workshop. There is no design or craftsmanship about him. He is a man possessed. Poetry simply gushes forth like clear sweet water from a spring. He sings essentially of love. There is a superficial monotony of theme but those who read him today finds his odes as fresh, original and inspiring as they must have been some seven hundred years ago when they moved men to rare heights of joy and ecstasy. Thousands of odes in the Diwan, hammer essentially on the same theme but the treatment is so subtle and sincere that it is hard to resist the power, beauty and movement of his verse. The theme recurs, no

1. Life and Works of Jalal-ud din Rumi, by Afzal Iqbal, p. 165

doubt, but every ode invests old words with a new meaning, unearths a fresh angle, and brings about a deeper and more sensitive perception of the emotion that is love.

انصاف بده که عشق نیکو کار است

زانست خلل که طبع بد کردار است

تو شهرت خویش را لقب عشق نهی

از شهرت تا بعشق ره بسیار است¹

[Love, you must concede (in all fairness), leads to goodness but the trouble arise because of the evil nature of man. You style your lust by the name of love. But between love and lust there is a big distance.]

The Diwan is a world of its own. There is nothing objective or scientific about it. Here the concept of time and space changes, the distinction between space and speechlessness disappears. A moment of love is transformed into eternity. There is no analysis, no explanation, no apologies for the bold assertion that Rumi makes about the intensely subjective experience which transforms his own life. He takes the reader along on his voyage of discovery and gently helps him share his own exhilarating joy and happiness in a complete voluntary surrender to the will and vagaries of his Beloved. There is no attempt to preach, to persuade, to convince. The many moods of love find spontaneous expression in some of the most moving poetry of ever written by man success to him is as beautiful as

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failure, sweet union as welcome as the pangs of separation. In his world good and evil cease to exist the distinction between ugliness and beauty disappears, the hymn of hate becomes totally unnecessary and irrelevant- there is only the symphony of love, truth and beauty. The veils are lifted, slowly but surely, the old idols crumble like a house of cards and Rumi guides one on the path- sure footed, supremely humble, and allows one a glimpse of the inner mystery, and the majesty of love. It is no empty boast when he sees that his heart and tongue have had many a mind to grasp the secret and mystery of the soul.

گوشها گشته اند محرم غیب

از زبان دل سخن ور ما¹

In the one of the Diwan one comes across Rumi in all his moods. There are moments of joy and exhilaration, there are moods of sorrow and grief's; oneness glimpses of union as one comes across the state of separation, but in all the turmoil and confusion of life one detects a quiet inner conviction, a telling determination to accept the challenge, resolve the conflict and create something truly immortal. With all the apparent agitation and restlessness, the emotional upheaval consequent on the separation from Shams is diverted to creative challenge where frustration gives way to a sense of fulfilment and promise. Despite all the agony and pain that Rumi has gone through one does not come across any shrieking cries in the Diwan. There are no violent senses, no loud

1. Life and Works of Jalal-ud din Rumi, by Afzal Iqbal, p. 166

complaints, no ugly protest, no demonstrative disagreement with the Beloved. On the contrary, he is able calmly to recollect the terrifying experience of the storm which once seems so completely to sway him off his feet.

Shams-i- Tabriz is of course the hero of the Diwan though Zarkob comes in for a fare portion of praise. The odes addressed to Shams, however, give some idea of the supreme surrender of Rumi to what he considers the symbol of perfect man. Shams is identified with the primeval man; he is Adam, Jesus and Merry, all rolled into one, is at once the secret and the revealers of mysteries to man; bitterness is rendered sweet by him, he converts disbelief into faith. At his touch to thorn turns in to a rose. He is Rumi's life, his soul, his faith, his beliefs as well as disbeliefs. There is nothing higher than him- he is the sovereign of sovereigns and from him Rumi begs a share of faith and fortune.....

هم ادم و نم توی هم عیسی و مریم توی

هم راز و هم محرم توی چیزی بذه درویش را

تلخ از تو شیرین میشود کفر از تو چون دین میشود

خار از تو نسرین میشود چیزی بده درویش را

جان من و جانان من !
کفر من و ایمان من !

سلطان سلطانان من !^۱ چیزی بده درویش را

Shams is invested with all kinds of paradoxical qualities and it is to him that

1. Life and Works of Jalal-ud din Rumi, by Afzal Iqbal, p. 168

turns for guidance, help and support in the tortuous task of scaling slippery spiritual heights. Shams is at once his friends, confident, master and guide. He is the Nooh, the spirit, the conqueror and the Conquered. He is the light, the revelation. He is at the same time a drop and an ocean. He is both a mercy, grace and a terror. He is in brief a paragon of virtues which reduce desperate paradoxes into a pattern of harmony and unity. It is to him that Rumi turns time and again in the Diwan for inspiration.¹

The historian Al Aflaki in his collection of anecdotes called Menaqibu Arifin, gives a number of stories relating to the miracles and wise sayings of Jalal. Many of these miraculous performances were followed by the conversion of those who witnessed them. A marvel or a wise saying of Jalal was generally accompanied by music and dance, which reminds us of the jubilations of the Indian Gods after Rama's victories over his enemies. These stories, interesting enough in themselves, can scarcely be credited to such a learned man as Jalal undoubtedly was. After all, the significance of Jalal lies not in these rather lamentable fairy tales, but in the fruit of his work. Jalal like the lord Buddha, suffered considerably from the addition of fabulous tales and fancies of no real moment of his teachings.

Al-Aflaki tells a pretty story concerning the tenderness of Jalal for little children. As the poet passed by some children, they left their play and ran to him and bowed, Jalal bowed in response. One little boy, some distance off, seeing the honour bestowed upon his playmates, cried to Jalal: "wait for me until I come!"

1. Life and Works of Jalal-ud din Rumi, by Afzal Iqbal, p. 169

And Jalal waited and bowed to the little child. This story is worth more than juggler's tricks.¹

The lyrical- we have already noted the acceptance of the Asrarnama. Among the other literary influences, according to Mr Nicholson we may note the poems of Sanai, Sadi and Nizami. The fact that Jalal's poetry sometimes faintly resembles Omar Khayyam is too slight to be of any value. Mr Nicholson very ably sums up the nature of the Mathnawi and Divan respectively; "The one is a majestic river, calm and deep, meandering through immeasurable ocean; the other a foaming torrent that leaps and plunges in the ethereal solitude of the hills." The poetry of Jalal is not of equal merit. His work seldom if ever has the technical polish of Jami. There is too much of it; too much produced in the belief that all his poetry was inspired. He is fond of harping on certain words, and as far as the translations are concerned he has little sense of honour! There was certainly room for a touch of honour in the poets description of Iblis receiving from God a gift of beautiful woman whereby to tempt mankind; but Jalal entirely ignores it. These weaknesses are almost lost in the strength and purity and lyrical grandeur of many of Jalal's poems. He carries us along on a torrent of heavenly music. The rhythmic swing of his wonderful dance is soul-stirring. We seem to move exultantly, ecstatically to the sound of the poet's singing, far behind the silver stars into the presence of the Beloved. With what reverence, with what a glow of smile and subtle suggestion he describes the Beauty of the Beloved! With what exquisite passion he foretells the External Union! Then there is a lull in this fierce spiritual

1. Rumi the Persian Mystics, by F. Hadland Davis, p. 36-38

song, and Jalal sings, ever so gently and with an infinite tenderness, about human tears being turned into "rainclouds". He sings about the meeting of two friends in paradise, with the oft-repeated refrain, "Thou and I." There seems in this poem an indescribable and almost pathetic on the idea of human friendship and the Divine Friendship, a yearning tenderness for that human shadow, passing shadow though it be. Jalal appears to have the power of producing almost orchestral effects in his music of the spheres. There is that terrific touch of Wagner about his poetry, and in those suggestive Wagner-pauses there is tenderness of expression more touching, more truly great than the loud triumphant notes. Jalal has truly said, "Our journey is to the Rose-Garden of Union." He sang about the Divine Rose-Garden; but did not forget to sing about the roses that fade and the human hearts that ache. We seem to see Jalal ever bowing to the little child in all his wonderful singing.¹

Jalal is said to have forty three years engaged in writing the Mathnawi. Often whole night were spent in composition. Jalal recites and his friend Hasan copying it down and sometimes singing portions of the verse in the beautiful choice. At the completion of the first book Hasan's wife died, and two years elapsed before the work was continued. The Masnavi is full of profound mysteries, and a most important book in the study of Sufism- mysteries which must, for the most part, be the most part, be left to the discernment of the reader. Jalal himself has said that great love is silent. It is in silence that we shall come to understand and supreme Mystery of Love that has no comparison. The keynote to the Masnavi

1. Rumi the Persian Mystics, by F. Hadland Davis, p.p.38- 41

may be found in the prologue to the first book. The poet here sings of the soul's longing to be united with the Beloved. The fact that he, and all other Sufi poets, uses as an analogy the love between man and woman renders the spiritual meaning extremely vague. We have, however, already considered this point in the introduction and it needs no further explanation. The Mathnawi has all the pantheistic beauty of the Psalms, the music of the hills, the colour and scent of roses, the swaying forest; but it has considerably more than that. These things of scent form of colour are the Mirror of the Beloved; these earthly loves the journey down the valley into the Rose-Garden where the roses never fade and where love is.¹

About music, an important element in the life of a mystic, Rumi explains:

رقص و جولان بر سر میدان کنند

رقص اندرو خون خود مردان کنند

چون رهند از دست خود دستی زنند

چون جهند از نفس خود رقصی کنند

مطربا نشان از درون دف می زنند

بحرا در شور شان کف می زنند²

'Holy' man dance and wheel on the (spiritual) on battle field: they dance in their

1. Rumi the Persian Mystics, by F. Hadland Davis, p.p. 41-42

2. Life and Works of Muhammad Jalal-ud din Rumi, by Afzal Iqbal, p. 78

own blood. When they are freed from the hand (domain) of self, they clap hand; when they escape from their own imperfection, they make a dance.

From within them musician strike the tambourine; at their ecstasy the seas burst into foam.'

Ihiya "Ulum" is written in concise prose but much the same views are expressed there in great detail. And look at these passage from Alchemy of happiness. "the heart of man has been so constitute by the Almighty that, like a fluent, it contains hidden fire which is evolved by music and harmony, and renders man beside with himself with ecstasy, these harmonies are echoes of that higher world of beauty which we call the world of spirits; they remind man of his relationship to that world, produce in him an emotion so deep and strange that he himself is powerless to explain it. The effect of music and dancing is deeper in proper as the natures in which they act and simple and prone to emotion; they fan into a flame whatever love is already dormant in the heart, whether it be earthy and sensual, or divine and spiritual."

Again on page 9 of the Mathnawi, we see this line:

آفتاب آمد دلیل آفتاب

گر دلیلت باید از وی رو متاب

Compare this with Ghazzali:

عرفت ربی بر ربی ولو ربی لاعرفت ربی

Of love Rumi says,

عشق های کزپی زندگی بود

عشق نبود عاقبتِ زندگی بود

Again Rumi talks of the meaning of this world

این جهان زندان و ما زندانیان

حضره کن زنداد و خود را و رهان

چیست دنیا از خدا غافل بدن

نی قماش و تقره و میزان و زن¹

In Book I of the Mathnawi, for example' Rumi narrates an interesting story of contention between the Greeks and the Chinese in the art of painting. This allegory, illustrating the difference between formal theology and mysticism, is related earlier by Ghazzali in 'Yahia Ulum' considering how often parables used in this chapter of Yahia appear in the Book I of the Mathnawi, it is highly probable that Ghazzali is the source. Nicholson pertinently points out ' that while in both the older versions of the Story it is the Chinese who polish a wall in order that the picture painted by the artist of Rum may be reflected on the shiny surface, Jalaluddin represents the painting as being done by the Chinese and the polishing by the Ruins. His reason for making the change is evident. Since the polishers typify Sufi saints and mystical adepts, a Rumi in a poem addressed to Rumi's

1. Life and Works of Muhammad Jalal-ud din Rumi, by Afzal Iqbal, p.79

could not fail to reverse the traditional roles; and of course the reversal is artistically right. The first readers of the Mathnawi must have enjoyed the triumph of Rum as much as they would have resented the tactlessness of the poet if he had told them the story just as he had received it'.¹

The analogy of light and colour is a favourite theme with Rumi:

How wilt thou see red and green and russet before (seeing) these tree (colours)
thou see the light?

But since they mind was lost (absorbed) in (perception of) the colour, these
colours because to thee a veil from (debarred thee from contemplating) the light.

In as much as at night those colours were hidden, thou sawest that thy vision of
the colour was (derived) from the light.

There is no vision of colour without the colour without the external light. Even so
it is with the colour of inward phantasy.²

In Book II of the Mathnawi, we come across the story of a police Inspector who summoned a man who had fallen dead- drunk on the ground to go to prison. It comprises six books, containing in all, according to Al Aflaki's statement, 26,660 couplets. The second book was begun in 1263 A.D, two years after the completion of the first, when the work was interrupted by the death of the wife of Hasan Husamud-Din, the author's favourite pupil and amanuensis. The first book

1. The Mathnawi of Jalaluddin Rumi, books i&ii, Commentary 202-203, Nicholson

2. Life and Works of Muhammad Jalal-ud din Rumi, by Afzal Iqbal, p 80

therefore, was ended in A.D. 1261, but we have no means of knowing how long it was probably begun some considerable time after the death of Sham's-i- Tabriz and was completed before the end of A.D. 1273, when the death of Jalaluddin took place. Its composition, therefore, probably extended over a period of some ten years. Each book except the first begins with an exhortation to Hasan Husamud- Din Ibn Akhi Turk, who is likewise spoken of in the Arabic preface of Book-I as having inspired that portion also. As he became Jalaluddin's assistant and amanuensis on the death of his predecessor, Salahud-Din Feridun Zar-Kub ("the Gold beater") in A.D. 1258. It is probable that the Mathnawi was begun after this period.

It is unnecessary to say more about Jalaluddin's life, of which the most detailed and authentic account is that given by al-Aflaki in his 'Act of the Adepts', partly translated by Red house. It is true that many of the miraculous achievements of Jalaluddin and his predecessors and successors which are recorded in this work are quite incredible, and that it is, moreover marred by a few anachronisms and other inconsistencies, but it was begun only forty five years after the master's death (viz, in A.D. 1318) and finished in 1353 and was, moreover compiled by a disciple living on the spot from the most authoritative information available, at the express command of Jalaluddin's grandson, Chelebi Amir Arif, the son of Bahauddin Sultan Walad.¹

As regard the lyrical poems which form the so-called Diwan of Shams-i-Tabriz

1. A Literary History of Persia, by E.G. Browne, vols- I & II, p.p. 518-519

implied by Dulatshah that they were chiefly composed during the absence of Shams-i- Tabriz at Damascus, while Rida Quli Khan regards them rather as having been written in memoriam, but Nicholson's own view, which is probably correct is "that part of the Diwan was composed while Shams-i- Tabriz was still living, but probably the bulk of belongs to a later period." He adds that Jalaluddin was also the author of a treatise in prose, entitled *Fihī-mā fihī*, which runs to 3,000 baits". This work is very rare, and I cannot remember ever to have seen a copy".

Both the *Mathnawi* and the *Diwan* are poetry of a very high order. For the former it is commonly said in Persia that it is "the Quran in the Pahlawi (i.e., Persian) language." While its author describes it, in the Arabic preface to Book-I, as containing "the Roots of the Roots of the Religion, and the discovery of the Mysteries of Reunion and sure knowledge.¹

By 1261, the year he began the *Mathnawi*, Rumi had already integrated his personality. Having resolved the conflicts in his heart, he now experienced oneness with all. He had undergone rebirth numerous times and easily related himself to humanity, for whom he felt a great concern and desire to guide. At the request of a new bosom friend, Husam-al Din (generally known as Ibn Akhi), Rumi interpreted the human situation and the seeker's path to perfection during his nightly dances, to the accompaniment of the reed, Rumi related to Husam al Din the essence of man's inward state. This practice continued for about ten

1. A Literary History of Persia, by E.G. Browne, vols- I & II, p.p. 518-519

years. In the sixth volumes of the Mathnawi, Rumi reveal the innermost activities of man's soul in quest of innermost certainty. He calls the Mathnawi, "the root of the root of the root of religion in respect to its unveiling of the mysteries of a attaining truth and certainty. It is as a station and most excellent as a resting place.¹

Rumi's Mathnawi in the west

The Mathnawi of Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi is one of the most highly acclaimed poetical works of the past ages, by the savants and sages. The first great compiler and interpreter of the immortal Persian literature, Prof. E.G. Browne, considered Rumi the most eminent Sufi poet and the Mathnawi as a great poem of all times. But what is most thought provoking and heart warming for us, is the life long devotion of the most eminent scholars like R.A. Nicholson and A.I. Arbery, who dedicated their creative efforts to the translations, interpretations, appreciation and propagation of the Message and Muse of the immortal Reed player of Konia, for the English knowing world.²

The saintly scholar, R.A. Nicholson, regarded the Masnawi as 'Unique panorama of universal existence, unrolling itself through 'Time and Eternity' and according to Arbery 'Rumi was the man who enriched humanity with a splendid and massive contribution to literature and thought, whose greatness is as much as acknowledged in the West as in the East."³

1. Rumi The Persian, the Sufi, by A.Reza Areseh, p.p. 91-92

2. The Sayings of Rumi and Iqbal, by dr. Khawaja Abdul hamid Irfani, p.1

3. ibid, p.2

These short representative reference from the three most widely revered scholar literatures, have been quoted to show how deeply the inner self of, even the twentieth century West, swamped by the stark naked material is thirsting for the seven hundred years old, the soul- stirring wine of love. The conscience of the West hopes to find solace and satisfaction, in the message of peace preached by the Masnawi. The divinely melody from the hills and dales of the East has found its echo from the hearts in the far off West.

Masnawi And the Muslims

As was to be expected the Masnawi been regarded by the Muslim scholars, Saints and sages through the past ages, as the most acceptable interpretation of the teachings of Islam. The last of the greatest classical and mystic poets, Maulana Jami (818-898A.H. or 1414-1492 A.D.) has remarked that Masnawi of the spiritual leader Rumi is the Quran in the Pahlawi language.

مثنوی مولوی معنوی

هست قرآن در زبان پهلوی¹

The widely- revered and eminent philosopher- poet of the Shia World, Mulla Hadi Asrar Subzwari (1212-1280A.H.) in his commentary on the Masnawi has said that ‘ Masnawi is an exposition of the glorious Quran, and whatever the Masnawi puts forth is, infact, the true meaning and interpretation of their holy book Quran.

1. The Sayings of Rumi and Iqbal, by Dr. K.A.H. Irfani, p.2

In Pakistan and India

In the vast Indo-Pak sub-continent with its great and rich heritage of Persian literature and Islamic traditions the Masnawi occupied the highest place for any poem of its kind. Perhaps no where else in the world, one could find so many and so beautifully written and decorated manuscripts of the Voluminous Mathnawi as in the private and public libraries spreading from the East Bengal and Hyderabad (Deccan) to Kashmir, Peshawar, Punjab, Sind And more other parts of the land.

It could neither be possible nor it is deemed necessary to name or quote the numerous Muslims scholars and divines who have offered heart-warming commentaries on the Mathnawi during the past centuries; the short reference already quoted may give an adequate idea of how the great scholars and mystic thinkers have responded to the Mathnawi.¹

The Mathnawi is a lament of love, issuing from the soul, yearning for a reunion with its original source the common ear, turned dull and deaf by the loud noise of the machine age, may not be able to hear the divinely noise, or the eye bedimmed or dazzled by the flashing of the electric light may not see the rose gardens of the paradise, but those with ears and eyes of divine understanding equipped with the new and improved instruments for a better understanding have found in the Mathnawi something more than their predecessors. The head and heart of man, with the aid of new research techniques, have penetrated deeper and further than man did ever before.²

1. The Sayings of Rumi and Iqbal, by Dr. K.A.H. Irfani, p.3

2. ibid, p.4

UNESCO has designated the year 2007 as the “year of Maulana” (the 800th anniversary of Rumi’s birth) taking into account that relations between the west and the Muslim world have reached their lowest ebb, creating a dangerous gulf which is growing every day. Through philosophical and mystical concepts in Hazrat Maulana’s works, his importance and spiritual eminence, in whose thoughts we can see a common and shared background for all humans, our dialogue would achieve harmony and unity deeply immersed in the love of and respect for others, whoever they may be.¹

The year 2007 marks the 800th anniversary of the birth of Maulana Jalalud-Din Rumi. To celebrate this occasion the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism organised an International Symposium. The Symposium was held on 8th -12th May in Istanbul and Konya. More than 150 scholars participated in the Symposium from Nationalities as diverse as America, Mexico, India, France, Spain, Turkey, Iran, Indonesia, Singapore, Egypt, Syria, Bangladesh and Pakistan. To name some of the most prominent participants: Dr. Syed Hossein Nasr, William Chittick, James Morris, Carl Ernest, Omid Safi Abdul Karim Soroush. The scholars from Pakistan included Dr. Javed Iqbal, Mr. Suhyel Umer, Dr Shahzad Qaisir, Dr. Arif Naushahi and Dr. Safir Akhtar. The papers read at 34 parallel sessions of the Symposium covered scores of dimension of Rumi’s Thought, its meaning and significance for the contemporary world. Some of them included, for example, the structures and various themes of the Mathnawi, the place of the Quran, the Sunnah and the prophet in it, Rumi’s relationship with

1. Iqbal Review, Journal, Iqbal Academy, Pakistan, Rumi’s 800th birth, oct 2007.

other important Islamic figures like Ibn "Arbi, Sadruddin Qunais, Bayzid Bistami and others, his concepts of love, Reason, Justice and Generosity and the diffusion of his teachings in the contemporary world.

The opening ceremony was chaired by the Turkish Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, while the threaten the world today keynote address were delivered by Professor Dr. Kenen Gurosy and Prof. Dr. Seyyed Hossein Nasr. The latter emphasised in his address the importance of Rumi's message for the present day world. He said that it is with help of Rumi's teachings that we can fight against the dangerous trends that threaten the world today. As examples of this threat he mentioned the environmental crisis, devotional intellectual tendencies, like fundamentalism, secularism and feminism. He said if we want to present to true image of Islam to the world today, Rumi is the key. Dr. Nasr also emphasized the need to recognize the universality of his teaching and stop limiting him to Afghanistan, Iran or Turkey due to his relationship with certain cities in these countries. 'We must save Rumi from our own pettiness's. At the end he said that every lover of Rumi should be grateful to the Turks for preserving Rumi's heritage for eight hundred years. In the inaugural Session of the Konya Symposium Mr. Tahir Akyurek, the mayor of central city of Konya, said that Rumi is an important asset against Islamophobia. He hoped that the symposium will contribute to peace and humanity.

Here is the gist of some of the papers read in this international symposium.

1.Dr. Jave Iqbal compared the Satanology of Rumi with that of Allama Muhammad Iqbal concentrating of Rumi's treatment of "Iblis and Mu'awiyah,"

and Iqbal's famous poem "The Parliament of Iblis." He maintained that according to the mystical interpretation, the Satan is a lover in sufferance who aspires to take revenge from his rival due to him he was veiled from his Beloved. He said that according to him Rumi's divine mercy must prevail over everything including Satan. On the other hand, Iqbal depiction of Satan is quite different from the mystical interpretation. Satan appears in the said poem as cunning and cruel adversary of human being, though a lover of God's unity but diplomacy and deceit are his characteristic features.

2. Professor Carlaw. Ernst elaborated in his paper the structure and Meaning in Prefaces of Rumi's Mathnawi. He said that according to Rumi's own contention the subject matter of Mathnawi is the root of the root of the religion. In his prefaces to the Mathnawi, Rumi sets his goals of sufi Education. Dr. Ernst highlighted Rumi's complain, like other mystics, of the inadequacy of language in spiritual matters because of the absolute transcendence of the divine essence. Dr. Ernst that in Rumi's views it is love that can provide remedy for this inadequacy, dr. Ernst also noted that one characteristic feature of Rumi's style is 'brevity of text and richness of meaning. Regarding Rumi's preface to Book II, Professor Ernst said that in it Rumi emphasized the necessity of revealing wisdom in proportion of the capacity of the receptacle. Another scholar in the same panel, Dr. Muhammad Isa Waley also talked about the content and message of the prefaces to the six books of Mathnawi. He said that as Rumi is not a systemiser, it cannot be said that his prefaces encapsulate the entire message that the Mathnawi delivers. He said that the prefaces also do not deal with the themes of the

following books. Dr. Waley mentioned the essential themes of the some of the prefaces. Thus he told the audience that the central theme of the preface to Book III is the attainment of science of Divine Transcendence, preface to Book IV, talks about the sources of hope and hold the thankfulness to God as the key. The preface of the Book V elaborate the distinction between Shari'ah, Tariqah and Haqiqah. In this very panel Seyed Safavi presented a theory of coherence in the contents of Mathnawi according to which Book III is divided into 12 discourses which are further divided into three groups in line with the division of Aql into Aql Juzi, Aql Rabbani and Aql Kul.

3. Professor Annabel Keller illuminated Rumi's relationship with the great Sufi, Bayazid al Bistami. She said that Rumi's reverence for the latter can be easily seen from the lavish titles he gives in the Mathnawi and from the fact that Bistami is the person to whom to whom the largest number of line is devoted in the Mathnawi. Rumi devotes 300 lines in his masterpiece to Bistami. One of the reason for Rumi's fascination for Bistami might be that Bistami is the most charismatic figure in history. Rumi just mentions Bistami's name, quotes some of his sayings or sometimes relates certain anecdotes about him. She said that the five anecdotes thus related by Rumi represent stages in the life of Bistami and his procession from Shariah to Tariqah to Haqiqah. In Dr. Keeler's view, these anecdotes from Bistami are included by Rumi not as pieces of factual information but as illuminative examples for everyone. She said that Rumi tries to explain the ecstatic sayings attributed to Bistami in a number of ways. At times he refers to the latter's being 'intoxicated' in divine love while sometimes he likens him to

someone who is possessed by the firm. Still at other occasions he declares Bistami as a self-less and annihilated mystic.

4. Omid Safi from Hamdard University, spoke about Rumi's relation to the prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, Safi started by saying that the teachings of Maulana help us turn to the deepest and the loftiest meanings of the Islamic tradition. Dr. Safi said that the modern Islamic world in which the slogans of 'relation to Quran and Sunnah' and raised the term 'Muhammadanism' is not liked as identical to 'Islam'. However, if we see with Rumi, who speaks of the Sufi as the inheritors of the light of Muhammad and emphasizes the adorning of the self with the 'Muhammadan morals, Akhlaq-i- Muhammadi, we can see a justifications in the use of this term. Dr. Safi then proceeded to elaborate how one sees the marvellous reflection of the character traits of the prophet, peace be upon him in the personality of Rumi. Dr. Safi concentrated particularly on humility and related several anecdotes from Rumi's life, for instance his bowing down in respect before a Christian monk for more than thirty times, while the latter bowed only one in the beginning; Dr Safi contrasted this to the attitude prevalent in the modern Islamic world. At the end he pointed to another dimension of the relationship of Rumi with the prophet, namely the prophet as a cosmic being and purpose of the creation of the whole universe.

5. Mariana Málinova spoke on the "The Dynamics in the image of Muhammmad in the writings of Jalaluddin Rumi". From the prophecy to the station of seeing, she said that according to Rumi, because the prophet Muhammmad is personification of Islam, following the example of Muhammad is the first step of

the Sufi path and the Mi'raj is the archetype of the spiritual journey. His message contains all divine messages. She said that in the context of the problem of unity and multiplicity the concept of the al- Haquiqah al Muhammadiyyah is the key which is Universal spirit of everything and father of all creatures.

6. Clara Jane nadal's paper was titled From the Spinning of stars to the spinning of the words. She started by mentioning Rumi's predicament after his separation from Shams Tabrizi and the transformations of his heart went through, as a result of which, she maintained, it became one with Shams and then the macrocosm. She moved from the elaborate element of movement as the essence of life, as represented in the traditional dances. This movement also represents the idea that human heart, which is the centre of human being thanks to its theomorphic nature, is capable of assuming all forms.

7. Muhammad Sid al- Maulawi read a paper titled ' A personal Interpretation of Rumi's teachings and the philosophy of Rotation'. In the beginning he shed light on the three phases of Rumi's life: as jurist consult, meeting with Shams and after separation from Shams. Al Mawlawi said that the sole target of Rumi's writings and teaching was the production of perfect human beings. The steps Rumi proposed for the task, said al- Mawlawi are first, the emancipation of reason, second, freedom of the will and third, contemplation in the depths of the human self. Al- Mawlawi elaborated that Rumi allowed his disciple to marry and engage in occupations and trade unlike other mystics and emphasized that an ascent to God cannot be made except with power. He concluded that ethics was at the centre of Rumi's teachings.

8. Dr. Alice Husnberger compared the concept of reason in Rumi and Nasir Khusraw. She started by mentioning that the precedence of love over reason was controversy in the 13th century Sufism. She said that though Rumi and Nasir Khusraw came from two different intellectual traditions there are certain similarities between the two, for instance, both wrote in Persia for religious purposes and both were spiritual leaders. She said that Khasraw's main source was neo-platonic philosophy and Ikhwan al Safa so according to him reason was at the highest level and love was inferior to it. On the other hand Rumi, a Sufi rather than a philosopher developed his own intellectual vocabulary. He believed in the supremacy of love over the reason and said that lovers are selfless and, unlike the philosophers fearful of death, dies to be drowned. Rumi says that the rationalist has wooden legs and he criticises the four juristic schools for having failed to understand the power of love. Dr. Hansberger concluded that when Rumi criticises reason he is not against the idea of universal reason but that of particular.

Jalalud-Din undoubtedly perceived his father as a man of great integrity and his mother a woman of great warmth and self-sacrifice. From him Rumi acquired knowledge of the times, and from observing him in action and speech he developed outstanding character traits. Moreover, the public expected such a distinguished family to set an exemplary life and impart social values. Thus, from the beginning people respected him and the respect increased as Rumi became an important spiritual leader.¹

1. Rumi the Persian, The Sufi, by A Reza Areseh, p.31

In the company of his father he had the privilege of meeting the most prominent spiritual leaders of the time, including many Sufis, among them 'Attar' who presented him with his mystical text 'Asrar Nama.(Treatise on Secrets) and Al-Suhrewardsi, the great illuminist. Rumi thus gained from his contact with both his father and the Sufies.¹

Professionally he gained some recognition in jurisprudence, Islamic Law and Theology by the time he was twenty four. Rumi is neither a jurist nor philosopher, nor yet a poet, but with regards to basic truths he possesses profound comprehension which scorns imitation. He cares little for logical contradiction, in expression of his thoughts and sentiments, for it was not his object to found a system of philosophy or theology. So he adopted verse in place of prose as his instrument of expression which helped to maintain constancy of argument without the necessity of removing local inconsistencies. A great and creative thinker takes up all the philosophies of life that have risen before his time weaves together their threads of many hues, and out of their contradictions 'creates new unity'. Rumi had before him, on one side a vast structure of thought of purely Islamic origin on the other side was the vast volume of Greek thought, which was the creation of the highest minds. On one side was the wisdom of faith and the Quran and on the other the product of Reason. Rumi could not ignore any of these bodies of thought. He was not frightened by the that a certain opinion was logically inconsistent with the other. Honesty of thought has more value with him then

1. Rumi the Persian, The Sufi, by A Reza Areseh, p.p.31-32

consistency. In all these religions and philosophies which have wrought revolutions and discovered new domains in the universes of mind or space there exist important elements which reason has so far failed to humanise.

Rumi is great philosopher poet, but his philosophy is enlightened with spiritual frenzy and creative madness. The object of his poetry is not to entertain, or please or impart information, but to inspire the heart and elevate the mind.¹

Rumi being master in the realms of Reason give preference to love and experience over mere logical reason. He seeks to fortify self, instead of denying it. He contends that there is no contradiction between the Self and selflessness; the one without the other is indeed vain and meaningless.

He believe that Taqdir (Determinism) does not mean that actions and achievements of each individual have been determined by God before hand, but that 'Taqdir' is nothing more than the law of life.

Rumi believed that conditions otherwise contradictory are made one and harmonized in the Unity of Love. Love is the food of all life and cure of al ills. Love make man capable of absorbing God's attributes in his ego and became a share in Godhood. Love is the soul of all religions and morality. "Annihilation means to live in God without losing individual identity; the 'self'.²

Rumi believe that the words of matter as also of ideas, ideas and feelings are created by the Self of man to serve as instruments as well as a measure of his

1. The sayings of Rumi and Iqbal, by K.A.H. Irfani, p.58

2. ibid, p.59

infinite and unending progress toward the Absolute Self.

Iqbal in his ‘Asraro_Rumuz’ tells us how one day Rumi in his ‘Ma2ktab’ at Halab (Allepo) was engrossed in discussing problems of Philosophy. He was explaining to his pupils the intricacies of Neo-Platonic thought as also the views of the skeptics. Heaps of books lay around him and he was shedding light of wisdom all around him as he sat in all his glory. Suddenly Shams, looking haggard and disheveled walked in; looked casually around, and asked:

گفت این غوغای وقیل و قال چیست

این قیاس و هم و استدلال چیست¹

“what is all this noise and idle talk? What is this fruitless play of reason, fancy and argumentation?”

Rumi who did not like this intrusion in his discussions by an unknown stranger founded a little and then :

مولوی فرمود ندان لب به بند

بر مقالات خردمندان مخدن

پای خویش از مکتبم بیرون گذار

قیل و قال است این ترا با وی چکار

قال ما از فهم تو بالاتر است

شیشه ادراک را روشنگر است²

1. The Sayings of Rumi and Iqbal, by K.A.H. Irfani, p.39

2. ibid, p.39

"Rumi(Maulavi) said shut thy mouth of fool!

Do not ridicule the discourses of the wise. Get out of my "Maktab"-

We are having discussions; it is no business of yours. Our discourse is beyond thy understanding. It brightens the mirror of perception.(knowledge)" And then:

سوز شمس از گفته ملا

آتشی از جان تبریزی کشور

بر زمین برق نگاه او فتاد

خاک از سور دم او شعله زاد

آتش دل خرمن ادراک سوخت

¹ دفتر آن فلسفی را پاک سوخت

"Rumi hot words kindled the wroth of Shams and fire darted forth from Tabrizi's soul. The lightning of his look fell on the earth and by the fire of his breath, flames kept up from the dust".

Rumi who was completely bewildered by what had taken place before his very eyes, looked around in confusion and then addressed the old and haggard vision that stood there with a mysteriously meaningful smile on his lips.

گفت این آتش چسان افروختی؟

² دفتر ارباب حکمت سوختی

1. The Sayings of Rumi and Iqbal, by K.A.H. Irfani, p.40

2. ibid, p.40

He (Rumi) said, how didst thou kindle this fire? Thou hast burnt to ashes the books of the philosopher.”

The following report that Iqbal has put in the mouth of Shams, is in fact the enunciation of his most often quoted views regarding Reason and Love.

گفت شیخ ای مسلم زنار دار

ذوق و حال است این ترا با وی چکار

حال ما از فکر تو بالاتر است

شعله ما کیمیای احمر است

ساختی از برف حکمت ساز و برگ

از سحاب فکر تو بارد تنگ

آتشی افروز از خاشاک خویش

¹ شعله ای تعمیر کن از خاک خویش

“The sheikh (Shams) said o Muslim caught in the infidel's snare (thread)! This is an ecstatic experience; no business of thine!

My flame is the crimson and coloured elixir. Thou hast made thy equipment and outfit out of the snow of philosophy.

From the cloud of thy through rain down only the hail stone.”

“Set alight a fire from thy heap of straw. Build up the flame from thy dust (earth)”

1. The Sayings of Rumi and Iqbal, by K.A.H. Irfani, p.40

And Rumi's soul was literally set aflame. We know of no parallel for such a roaring conflagration that enveloped the entire Being of the towering philosopher and theologian. Rumi's own son, Sultan Walad has described in detail how Rumi left off his former way of life and gave himself upto the new influence. Just a few lines are quoted are to give a symbolic picture of the 'Revolution' in Rumi's soul.

روز و شب در سماع رقصان شد

بر زمین همچو چرخ گردان شد

بانگ و افغان او به عرش رسید

ناله اش را بزرگ و خرد شدید

"Day and Night he danced in ecstasy; he whirled like the sky on earth. His calls and cries reached the highest heaven and were heard by all the big and the small."

This sudden leap from the Head to the heart; from the traditional sanctuary of the 'Maktab' and the 'Mosque' on the open street has been variously commented upon. We quote here just the last two line of one of the Rumi's object of Rubais...

سجاده نشین با و قاری بودم

بازیچه کوکان کویم کردی¹

"i was respectable religious guide- you (o Shams) have made me the object of ridicule for the children in the street."

1. The Sayings of Rumi and Iqbal, by K.A.H. Irfani, p.41

The ascetic philosopher and jurist suddenly burst into rapturous and spontaneous melody, singing of the new-found fountain of love and Ecstasy. The erudite scholar who is not known to have composed any poetry before, began to pour upon his rapture and exclusion into the most heart warming “Ghazals”, that have never been equalled in their over brimming emotion, exuberance, spontaneously, and some time, even the words, seem to ‘dance’ with the rhyme and the rhythm. A few lines are quoted just to give the reader a short glimpse into the great soul burning with Love and exulting in the new experience:

چنان مستم چنان مستم من امروز

که از چنبر برون جستم من امروز

بجان بر آسمان عشق رفتم

بصورت گر درین پستم من امروز

نمیدانم کجايم؟ ليک فرخ

مقامي کاندر و هستم من امروز

گرفتم گوش عقل و گفتم اي عقل

برون رو کزتر و ارسنم من امروز¹

I am so intensely intoxicated today that i seem to have leaped out of the canopy of the sky.'

1. The Sayings of Rumi and Iqbal, by K.A.H. Irfani, p.41

"In spirit, I have ascended the high heaven of Love, though in appearance, I am living down on this earth."

"I know not where I am! But, full of bliss is the place (the state) where I happen to be today."

"I held reason by the ear and said o Reason go away; I am freed of the thee today."

Thus Rumi freed himself from the hair splitting reason and entered the domain of Love and Divine Frenzy. A new entered the rolling sphere of life' giving it a new light and a new and higher meaning. It was a new birth and the singer of the most rapturous songs known to poetry and the composer of the noblest Poem in man's worse, the Lay of the Reed, the Quran in Persian, was born.¹

Rumi's belief in the Quran and his regard for the prophet is deep-rooted. About the Quran, Rumi says...

گرچه قرآن از لب پیغمبر است

هر که گوید حق نگفت او کافر است²

The Quran is (dictated) from the lips of the prophet.

But if anyone says God did not speak it, he is an infidel.

1. The Sayings of Rumi and Iqbal, by K.A.H. Irfani, p.42

2. Rumi's Impact on Iqbals Religious thought, by Nazir Qaiser, p. xiii

Again:

هست قرآن مرتزا همچون عصا

کفرها را در کشد چون ازدها¹

"To thee the Quran is even as the rod (of Moses). It swallows up (all) infidelities', like a dragon."

About the prophet, Rumi says :

احمدار بکشاید آن پر جلیل

تا ابد بی هوش ماند جبر عیل²

"If Ahmad should display that glorious pinion (his spiritual nature), Gabriel would remain dumfounded unto everlasting."

Again Rumi asserts that God 'bestowed an existence on the heavens because of His Love for the prophet.

Rumi's Love for the prophet Muhammad (ص) and the homage he pays thereon are expressed in different ways. In Mathnawi alone there are numerous sayings of the prophet which Rumi has quoted and made captain of his verses. This explicitly denotes Rumi's love and regard for the prophet. "Still is the Nat of Maulana Rumi well known in Turkey and the countries where Rumi's mystical poetry is reads."

1. Rumi's Impact on Iqbal's Religious thought, by Nazir Qaiser, p. xiv

2. ibid, xiv

Rumi is regarded as an eminent religious scholar. "The Muslim world has honoured him with the title of Maulawi-i-Man'awi (The Doctor of meaning), a religious scholar who is capable of philosophising, of penetrating into the meaning physical and spiritual phenomena and lifting the veil of appearance to peep into the reality behind them." Undoubtedly "Rumi as a philosopher of religion stands shoulders above all those Muslin thinkers who are called hukama in the history of Muslim thought."

Rumi possesses an incontestable position as a mystic poet. The tribute paid to him by the western thinkers is particularly noteworthy in this respect. Dr. R.A. Nicholson expresses his views regarding Rumi's uniqueness as a mystic poet thus: "In Rumi the Persian mystical genius found its supreme expression. Viewing the vast landscape of Sufi poetry, we see him standing out as a sublime mountain -peak; the many other poets before and after him are but foot-hills in comparison. The influence of his example, his thought and his language is powerfully felt through all the succeeding countries; every Sufi after him capable of reading Persian has acknowledged his unchallenged leadership." Professor E.G. Browne terms him "the most eminent Sufi poet whom Persian have produced.-"To professor I.J. Arbery 'Jalaluddin Rumi has long been recognised as the greatest mystical poet of Islam, and it can well be argued that he is the supreme mystical poet of all mankind.'

Rumi is highly esteemed as a thinker not only for wide scope of his thought and profound insight, but also for being the forerunner of many modern streams of thought. His thought incorporates Valuntarism and spiritual Pluralism, the two

modern trends which reminds us of Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, Bergson, Lloyd Morgan, William James and James Ward in the post- Kantian period. Again in his thought Activism, Individualism, theory of Emergent Evolution and religious experience are blended into one- a fact which makes him an encyclopaedic thinker. His view of evolution is a great contribution in the history of philosophical and scientific thought. It has rightly been said of him in this respect: 'Neither modern philosophy nor modern science has left him behind. For about a century now the entire philosophical and scientific thought has been dominated by the concept of evolution.- Again, in the field of phrenology his thought is equally valuable. Erich Fromm rightly believes that Rumi was "a man of profound insight into the nature of man. He discussed the nature of the instincts, the power of reason over the instincts, the nature of the self, of consciousness, the unconscious and cosmic consciousness: he discussed the problem of freedom, of certainty, of authority. In all these areas, Rumi has a great deal to say which is important to those concerned with the nature of man.

Iqbal says that no equal has seen born after Rumi in the soil of Persia. He beautifully puts it thus:

نہ انہا پھر کوئی رومی عجم کی لالہ زارون سے

وہی آب و گل ایران و ہی تبریج ہی ساقی¹

1. Rumi's Impact on Iqbals Religious thought, by Nazir Qaiser, p. xii-xv

To Rumi self is not a datum; it is an achievement. Hence it is open to realization and development. Both Moses and Phararaoh are present in the self and for Rumi it is the choice of man to realize any of these possibilities.

Rumi believes that the self has great hidden potentialities and capacities of which man usually remains unaware. Rumi thus says:

چشم‌هء شیر است در توبی کنار

تو چرا می شیر جوی از تغار¹

"There is an illimitable fountain of milk within thee: why art thou seeking milk from the pail?"

Rumi advices man to fortify and develop the self. He asserts:

دانه باشی مرغکانت بر چند

غنچه باشی کودکانت بر کنند

دانه پنهان کن بکلی دام شو

عنچه پنهان کن گیاه بام شو²

" If you are a grain, the little birds will peak you up; if you are a bud, the children will pluck you off.

Hide the grain (bait), become wholly a snare; hide the bud, become the grass on the roof."

1. Rumi's Impact on Iqbals Religious thought, by Nazir Qaiser, p. 24

2. ibid, 24

The fully developed self does not disintegrate. The really developed personality does not dissolve even with the Reality is seen face to face as in mystic experience. Rumi beautifully explains it thus:

رنگ آهن محو رنک آتش است

ز آتش نی لافه و خامش وش است

چون بسرفی گشت همچون زرکان

پش انا النار است لافش بی زبان

شد ز رنگ و طبع آتش محتشم

گوید او من آتشم من آتشم¹

The colour of the iron is naught in the colour of the fire: it (the iron) boats of its fieriness, though (actually) it is like one who keeps silence.

When it has become like gold of the mine in redness, then without tongue its boat is “I am the fir.”

It has become glorified by the colour and nature of the fire: it says, “I am the fire”, I am the fire.”

At this stage it is imperative to discuss Rumi's concept of Fana. Fana literally means “passing away”. In pantheism, “Fana” is the disappearance and extinction of the individual in the universal”. But to Rumi it “means the annihilation of those

1. Rumi's Impact on Iqbal's Religious thought, by Nazir Qaiser, p. 28

experiences which bar the real self". It is actually the transformation of the self or liberation from the conventional self. In other words it is "cleaning one's own consciousness of what Rumi calls fictions, idols and untruths, and purifying the heart of greed, envy, jealousy, grief, and anger so that it regains its original quality of becoming mirror-like to reflect the reality within it".

Only after this state of Fana the self reaches the stage of Baqa, which is the subsistence and persistence of the self in the Divine attributes.

Dr. Nicholson expounds Rumi's view thus "Fana is seldom a purely negative conception. Its compliment is the positive state (Baqa), in which the 'self' that has 'passed away' by transmutation rather than 'annihilation' of its unreal attributes. 'Subsists or persists' in the divine attributes with which it has become ended.¹

That Fana is liberation from the conventional self and its completion is Baqa is beautifully expressed by Rumi thus:

این چنین معدوم کو از خویش رفت

بهرین هستیها افتاد و رفت

او بنسبت باصفات حق فنا است

در حقیقت در او را پقا است 1

1. R.A. Nicholsons Commentary , Vol. I& II, P.21

2. ibid, p. 136

“Such a non-existent one who hath gone from (become selfless) is the best of beings, and the great (one among them).

“ He hath passed away (Fana) in relation to (the passing away of his attributes in) the Divine attributes, (but) in passing away (from selfhood.) He really hath the life everlasting (Baqa.)”

This is precisely the reason that Rumi highly esteems the man who is born twice. He say:

چون دوم بار آمی زاده بزاد

پای خود بر فرق علتها نهاد¹

“(But) when a son of man is born twice, he plants his foot upon the head of (all) causes”.

This ‘rebirth’ may be called Baqa (living) which comes after the stage of Fana (transformation), as discussed before. However, this stage is very difficult to reach; as the transformation is not easy. One has to get Liberation from the conventional self.

Rumi says:

هر بنای کهنه کابادان کنند

نه که اول کهنه را ویران کنند

1. Rumi's Impact on Iqbals's Religious Thought, by Dr Nazir Qaiser, p. 32

"Whenever they (the builders) put an old building in good repair, do not they first ruin the old one?"

Rumi is a great advocate of freedom. According to him the self, by developing itself, has not only to shape its own destiny but also the destiny of the universe. And that cannot be possible without freedom of the will. Freedom of the will is both an acquisition and a precondition of deed.

To Rumi freedom of will is to be acquired by developing the personality. Thus it cannot be the lot of everybody. Rumi says that "complete freedom belongs only to the Perfect men".

Rumi believes that the Self is free, and not determined. He says,

امر ونهی و خشم تشریف و عتیب

نیست جز مختار را ای پاک جیب¹

"Command and prohibition and anger and conferment of honour and (bestowal of) rebuke concern him (only) who possesses the power of choice, o pure bosomed one."

According to Rumi if the self is already determined, it will not develop and reach its cherished goal. This is why Rumi criticise Jabriyya and Necessitarianism which "assert that Divine omnipotence excludes the possibility of free action on the part of man." Criticises the Jabriyya (Necessitarian), Rumi says:

پس تسفط آمد این دعوی جبر

لا جرم بدتر بود زین روز گبر²

"Hence this doctrine of Necessity is Sophisticism (Scepticism) consequently he (the Necessitarian), from this point of view, is worse than the infidel (believe in absolute Free- Will)".

1. Rumi's Impact on Iqbals Religious thought, by Nazir Qaiser, p.35

2. ibid, 35

1.2 Personality of Kabir

Amongst the several saints that have blessed our country, Kabir Das, the well known mystic poet, deserved a major credit for bringing about a revolution. He was a man of principles and practiced what he preached. People called him by different names like Das, Sant, Bhakta etc. As Das, he was referred to as the servant of humanity and thus a servant of divinity.¹

About Kabir's birth and parentage there is no unanimity among his biographers on the basis of external and internal sources and evidences. There is a near agreement on certain points.² Some legends state Kabir was the illegitimate son of Brahmin widow. One version of the legend is that he was conceived by a widow because of Ramananda's blessings and that like Christ, this occurred without a natural father. In order to protect himself from public slaver, the widow left her baby near a pond some way out of the city. A Muslim weaver called 'Ali, popularly known as Niru, saw the baby and being childless he and his wife Nima decided to adopt it as their own.³ Since they were issueless they adopted the baby who was christened as kabir by local Qazi. This view was accepted in the light of some verses of Kabir himself in which he describes the incident of his birth as a direct emancipation from God.

"I have just come from God
I was not born, nor did I dwell in a womb;

1. <http://www.thecolorsfindia.com/Kabir/index.html>

2. Unpublished article of Dr. Mansoor Alom. P. 2

3. A History of Sufism in India, by Sayid Athar Abbas Rizvi, p. 374

I have appeared a child as a Ian

I am not in heaven, or in earth, in any country."¹

But considerable researchers have however revealed that kabir was born into a family of weavers who were originally Nath Pandits and followers of Granthnath. But they were converted to Islam a generation or prior to the birth of Kabir. Dr. Mohan Singh, the author of "Kabir and Bhakti Movement" (Lahore 1934, p. 2-4) has also proved on the basis of the Holy Adi Grantha of the Shikhs that kabir was a Musalman by birth. Almost all European scholars who wrote on Kabir are of the same opinion that kabir was a Muslim by birth.

Sufis considered Kabir as a Muwahhid (follower of the Wahdatal-Wajud). Once Shaikh Ruzqu'llah Mushtaqi (1491-1581), a contemporary of Kabir, whether the celebrated Kabir, whose Bishunpads were on everyone's lips, was a Muslim or a Kafir. The reply was that he was muwahhid. The Shaikh then asked whether a muwahhid differed from both. Shaikh Sadullah replied that the truth was difficult to understand and such knowledge could only be acquired gradually.²

The Ain-i- Akbari mentions kabir in connection with the history of Orissa and Awadh. In both states he is referred to as muwahhid. At one places the author states that many subtle truths relating to his sayings and exploits were current among the people. Because of his catholicity of doctrine and charismatic personality he was friend to both Hindus and Muslaims. At another place he the author writes that Kabir

1. Unpublished article of Dr. Mansoor Alom. P. 2

2. A History of Sufism in India. By, Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizwi , p.373

muwahhid lived during the reign of Sikandar Lodi. Earlier Khwaja Yaqub, a son of Baba Farid, defined a muwahhid as follows:

"The Muwahhid is he whose main concern is good action. Whatever he does aims at seeking divine grace. Water does not drown him and fire does not burn him. Absorbed in Twahid (Wahdat al Wujud) he is in a state of self-effacement. A sufi or a lover belonging to this category is concerned with nothing, if he makes a quest for himself. When the lover is completely absorbed in the Beloved, the attributes of the lover and Beloved become identical.¹

Factual details of Kabir's life and activities are few and far between. His followers and the authors of the biographical dictionaries of the bhaktas, the Bhaktamal, constructed his life story mainly from legends and his own verses, which had generally been intended to satisfy the thirst of the soul to attain the return to God from whom it was separated. They were also a teaching device used to express beliefs. The Davistan-i- Mazahib gives Kabir's background according to the legends of the Vaishnavite vairagis (mendicants) with whom he was later identified. The only reliable facts about his life are that he lived in Banaras about the fifteenth century and was a weaver. The earliest authentic collection of his hymns and slokas was compiled in the Granth Sahib. A number of eighteenth century painters made portraits of him according to suggestions from their patrons.

Considerable controversy surrounds the name of his Guru. A Pir called Pitambar has been suggested as the person who filled this role. A Hindi scholar identified

1. A History of Sufism In India, by Athar Abbas Rizvi, p. 373.

Pitambar Pir with the Hindu God Rama. According to the Khazinatul- Asfiya Kabir was the disciple of Shaykh Taqi. Shaykh Taqi of Kara Manikpur, also a weaver by trade, should not be identified as Kabir's Guru for he was a disciple of Shaikh Salim Chisti (1478-1572). According to the Khazinaitul-Asfiya, Shaykh Taqi died in 984/1576-77) and Kabir died in (1003/1594-95). Nothing can be said about the authenticity of Shaikh Taqi's date of death but that for Kabir is undoubtedly incorrect. Another Shaykh Taqi lived in Jhusi, near Allahabad, although nothing else is known of him.

According to Vaishnavite devotional tradition Kabir was a disciple of Ramananda, however legends fail to suggest he was formally initiated by the saint. Some authors imply that Kabir had no earthly Guru and like Uwaisi Sufi, was directly in contact with a number of eminent Hindu saints and sufis. It is not unlikely Views on the Wahdat al –Wujud, expressed in Hindi impressed Kabir.

The Hindi verses called Dohas and doctrinal poems jointly known as Ranai'ni, from the majority of Kabir's poems. The most important of his verses were generally memorized by his disciples after they had been uttered, and then written down immediately or soon afterwards. This process gave rise to considerable interpolation and naturally many unauthentic verses are included. The verses in the Adi Granth, the Kabir Granthawali and the Bijak (treasury) are the most reliable.

Kabir was married and although he was unhappy with his role as a husband and father, he preached neither renunciation nor celibacy. Throughout his life when he

1. A History of Sufism in India, by S.A.A.Rizwi, p. 374

was not travelling he lived the traditional life of a married man. Before his death he is said to have migrated from Banaras to Maghar. Some authors suggested that Maghar was close to Banaras, others believe it was in the district of Basti, near Gorakhpur in U.P. The decision was deliberately taken by Kabir in order to belie the current Hindu belief that one who died in Maghar would return in a following life as an ass. Of the many dates given for kabir's death 1505 is the most reliable.

After his death Kabir's body was claimed by both Muslims and Hindus, the former wishing to bury it and the later to cremate it. When the door of the room where the dead body was lying was opened it was missing. According to tradition only a bunch of flowers was found under the sheet and these were divided amongst the two groups.

Kabir's concept of Absolute Reality was founded on the dvaitavaite-vilakshana- vada of the Nath. Its compatibility with the Wahdat-al- Wajud was responsible for Kabir's fame as a muwahhid. He says

"As the bubbles of the river are accounted water and blend with the water of the ocean,

So the man who looketh on all with an equal eye'

Shall become pure and blend with the Infinite¹

Another Kabir's hymn states:

" When a streme is lost in the Gan Ganges,

It becometh as the Ganges itself;

Kabir is similarly lost in God by invoking Him;

I ha The perfume of the sandal is communicated to the other trees,

They then become as the sandal itself.

He become as the true one and need not go elsewhere.

When the philosopher's stone is applied to Copper,

It becometh gold;

So Kabir having met the saints,

Hath become as God.

On the basis of the analogy of ice and water, Kabir wrote:

Water coagulates into ice

And ice melts into water

It (the Water) only changes its form

Now, nothing more can be added.¹

1. A History of Sufism in India, by S.A.A.Rizwi, p.375

Kabir's Nirguna Brahma has bothered transcendental and immanent nature. He is God of Gods's Supreme Lord, primal and omnipotent. He is unfathomable, unknowable, stainless and changeless. He is neither low nor high; in Him is neither honour nor dishonor. He is eternal, all pervading, defused and equally contend in all things. He extinguishes worldly sparks from the heart of his saints and dwells in their hearts permanently. Their music is intoxicated with God's elixir. The man in whose heart nothing dwells but God is perfect, to sum up are Kabir's own words:

"Though styled inaccessible and invisible, dwelleth within the heart.

None can find the limit of the secret of the sustainer on earth;

He shineth in the plantain blossom and in the sunshine,

And hath taken this dwelling in the pollen of the lovers.

God's spell is within the twelve petals of the heart where the holy Lord of Lakshmi reposeth.

The great God reacheth from the lower of the upper regions of the firmament.

He illumineth the silent realm,

Where there is neither sun nor moon.

He was in the beginning, he is without stain and happy

Know that the pervadeth the body as well as the universe.

He batheth in Mansarovar (the lake of the heart);

His password is "soham' (I am he).

He is not subject to merits or demerits,

Nor concerned with caste, with sunshine, or with shade; He is only found in the gurus asylums.

He who fixeth his attention on Him removeth it not,

Becometh released from transmigration,

And absorbed in the Infinite,

He who knoweth God in his heart.

And repeateth His name, becometh as He.

Saith Kabir, the mortal shall be saved

Who fixeth in his heart God's light and spell.¹

Kabir's void referred to sunya, a concept in Mahayana Buddhism and to Hindu esoteric philosophy. It represented his concept of the Ultimate Reality. In order to convey the idea of Reality transcending the casual relationship, he indulged in the ancient Indian practice of describing Reality through negatives; neti neti (not this, not this). It was only to Reality in more commonly known terminology that he used such words as Brahma, Om, Niranjan, Kartar, Sa'in, Vishnu, Rama, Krishna, Hari,

Govind, Muriri, Visambhar, Gopinath, jagannath, Mahadev, Allah, Rahim, Karim

and Khuda. The name most frequently used is Rama, who, as he himself explains, is Nirguna Rama. He reminds 'Kabir, call Him Ram who is omnipotent;

We must discriminate in mentioning the two Rams. The one Ram (God) is contained in all things; the other (Ram Chander) is only contained in one thing himself.

Again drawing on an everyday analogy in a sloka, Kabir wrote that God was like sugar scattered in sand, elephants could not find it, but the lowly ants could. Another example used was that he could feel himself absorbed in God just as the sound of a bronze vessel was absorbed back into the pieces after it was broken. Fearlessly and cuttingly Kabir criticized ritualism and preached craft, refusing to spare even monasticism in his scatting attacks. He also denounced hypocrisy, falsehood and deceitfulness in both religious and social ethics. Devotion, penance, austerity, fasting and ablutions were meaningless without knowing the way to love and serve God.

Frequently Kabir came into contact with Yogis, but he always remained unimpressed by their by their mated locks and unkempt appearance. In their emphasis on ascetic pursuits and obsession with physical exercises, he believed they had failed to inherit Gorakh's, real absorption with the supreme. To Kabir, one who was united with God was the real Yogi. Using the technical terms of Yogis in his verses, Kabir often argued with their beliefs. One such hymn is as follows:

'Meditation and remembrance of God are my two ear-rings independence of the world my patched coat;

Dwelling in a silent cave my devotional posture,

The abandonment of worldly desires my sect.

My king, I am a (Jogi) without temporal love;

I repine not at death and separation.

In the regions of the universe I find my horn;

The whole world, which I hold as ashes, is my wallet;

Riddance of the three qualities and release from

The world are my contemplative attitude.

I have made my heart and breath the two gourd of my lyre,

And unbroken attention on God its frame.

The strings are strong and break not;

The lyre playth spontaneously;

On hearing it the perfect are entranced,

And I no longer feel the swaying of worldly love.

Saith Kabir, the soul which hath played in this way

Shall not be born again.

Kabir strongly denounced the idol worship. Often he said that if God was found worshipping stone, he would worship a mountain. He goes on to say 'Better than that stone is a hand -mill which grindeth corn for the world to eat.'

Kabir noted that sculptors while carving idols stood on them yet were not instantly struck dead. Idol worshipers offered food to their Gods, which in reality was eaten by Brahmanas, said Kabir and he expressed shock to see that people killed creatures in order to feed these clay gods.

To Kabir, the prayers, pilgrimages and fasting of the Muslims were equally abominable. He was critical of Qazis, Mullas and Shaikhs and reminded them:

Conscience its prime teacher;

Then O priest, call men to pray to that mosque

Which hath ten gates.

Sacrifice, wrath, doubt and malice;

Make patience thine utterance of the five prayer.

The Hindus and the Muslimans have the same Lord;

What can the Mulla, what can the Shaykh do for man?

Saith Kabir, I have become mad;

Stealing my mind s way from the world I have become blended with God.'¹

In one of his hymns Kabir tells Brahmins and Millas alike that they should not condemn each others religious texts as false. What was untrue was the attitude which prevented the understanding of the Reality. According to Kabir, jnana (knowledge) and Bhakti complemented each other; but jnana was a spiritual experience not to be acquired through books. The Hindu Vedas and the Gayatris to Kabir helped their readers forget God and argued that he himself had been saved through the repetition of God's name, one who relied totally on the Vedas would be last. In the same strain he declared that Smriti, 'the daughter of the Vedas; was a fetter for men, and could even be called a serpent. Those who kept themselves aloof from the Vedas and the sacred books of Islam were pure. His own goal was described as follows:

"The Musalmans accept the Tariqat;

The Hindus, the Vedas and Puranas;

But for me the books of both religions are useless,

A man ought to study divine knowledge

To some extent instruct his heart.²

Kabir's criticism of contemporary religious beliefs and his own salvation do not

1 .A History of Sufism in India, by S.A.A.Rizwi, p.378

2. ibid, p.379

imply arrogance on his part. He considered himself to be the worst person alive and that everyone else was worthy. But he advised others to also to hold this view and even went to the extent of asking people to nothing and his salvation secured. There is one story that he became so disturbed by virtues that, in true malamati style, he pretended to be drunk and walked round the city with his own arm around the neck of a courtesan. Among the criticisms leveled against him like a police inspector and that his words were reminiscent of a dog's bark.¹

Although Kabir's earthly guru is unknown, in his verses he speaks frequently of the necessity of a guru to assist the search for the Absolute, rather than to merely rely on Yoga. Without such a teacher, a man would slip and perish. Through the guru's instruction a man was taught to remember God's name in his heart and was released from eternal transmigration. On meeting his guru, Kabir relates a feeling of great comfort and peace of mind. He believed that Hari (God) was estranged one could seek refuge in a guru, but if the guru was alienated there was no shelter. Only true saints should be sought as companions and those who even spoke to them received blessings transferred by them. One of Kabir's slokas says:

'Kabir, associated with holy men even though

Thou eat only barely bran;

What will be, will be; associate not with the apostate

1. A History of Sufism in India, by S.A.A.Rizwi, p.379

Even though he give thee better fare.¹

When Kabir's wife criticized him for neglecting his profession and associating with shaven headed saints Kabir told her they helped the spiritually needy, hence he accepted their protection. Breeding was unimportant in saintliness. The dust from a saint's foot had more value than a rosary or any other such objects. To Kabir saint's didn't really die they just returned home, while infidels and the unholy remained subject to the endless cycle of transmigration.²

With regard to death, Kabir compared the body with an earthen pot filled with water which inevitably would burst. Death came suddenly, the things of this world were fleeting and it was then too late to repent for ignoring God's name. As one had to account for one's deeds in this life, it was necessary to work for an end to transmigration. A saint's life, says Kabir, was a triumph over continual re-birth for it resulted in supreme bliss.

"If while living thou be dead, while dead return

to life by means of divine knowledge

and thus become absorbed in God;

if thou abide pure amid impurity,

1. A History of Sufism in India, by S.A.A.Rizwi, p.380

2. ibid.

thou shalt not again fall into
the terrible ocean of the world.¹

According to Kabir remembrance of God in the form of repetition of his name succeeded in annihilating transmigration for through it sins could be obliterated. Although Kabir described heaven through the use of negatives, to him it was a society of saints; he himself however, craved only absorption with God. He says;

'Everybody saith he is going thither (to heaven)

I know now where heaven is.

They who know not the secrets of their own hearts

Glibly talk of heaven.

As long as man desireth heaven,

He shall not where heaven's gate is,

Nor it moat, nor it plastered fortress.

Saith Kabir, what more can I now say

Than that the society of saints is heaven?²

1. A History of Sufism in India, by S.A.A.Rizwi, p 380

2. ibid

Essentially a bhakta, Kabir was totally absorbed in his quest for the Supreme. But he was also deeply concerned with the religious differences between the founded on false notions of religious superiority, a man was courageous who ignored the rituals of his own caste and this could lead to saintliness and he rebuked Brahmanas who find defilement in almost everything, reminding them that no impurity was attached to those who had God in their hearts. Being a member of the lowly caste of weavers was a source of great pride to Kabir. He advised people fields, in the weaver's shop and in the humble households. Poverty, patience and humility were the strangers to religion. They were like animals whom stuffed themselves with food, forgetting their salvation above criticisms were directed against Muslims state officials. Those who accumulated wealth and property without spending it, were also targets for Kabir's attack.¹

'God gave the miser wealth to keep,

But the blockhead calleth it his own.

When Death's mace toucheth his head,

It shall be decided in a moment whose wealth it is.

Again he reminds the wealthy:

'Kabir, this body shall depart; put it on same road

On which it may either hold converse with saints,

Sings God's praises.

Kabir frequently referred to Maya, in the Rig Veda, the term is used, in the sense of magical power and the Upanishads use it in the sense of false knowledge. In Sankar's advaita, the phenomenol world of nature and all beings which have no real existence emanate from maya. According to a general interpretation, maya leads created beings to an infatuation with the transitory pleasures of the world and flesh. It is the counterpart of the sufi nafs-i-lawwama, and Kabir uses it in this sense. He calls it a thief which break in to the hearts of the worldly and deprives them of their virtue. In a hymn Kabir describes maya as a hideous and repulsive (woman), whose nose he says only a few discriminating people could chop off.

Kabir lived far from the Lodi capital. During the last days of the Sharqis and in the reign of Bahlul Lodi, the Banaras region where Kabir lived was plagued with civil war and political struggle. The saint remained detached from this situation, his main concern being only with social and ethical regeneration. Kabir noted with distress how people dealt in bronze, copper, cloves and betel nuts. Thakurs measured the fields and the villagers were never free of debts entered in the Patwari's books. To him the most important account were those with God.

According to tradition, early in the region of Sikandar Lodi, after crushing his rival, Barbak, the Sultan remained for a period in Banaras. There the Muslims, led by Shaikh Taqi and the Brahman community, complained that those who accepted Kabir's ideas automatically ceased to be Hindus or Muslims. Kabir was imprisoned but various supernatural feats saved his life. Although such a story would seem mythical, according historical sources during Sikandar Lodi's reign, a Brahman called Bodhan or Lodhan declared Islam and Hinduism as both true religions. The

Brahman may have come from either Lakhnawati in the Bijnor district or Lakhnur in Sambhal. In both these regions the impact of Kabir's ideas was not great. Lodhan seems instead to have been influenced by the spiritual milieu of the fifteenth century. Qazi Piyara and Shaik Budh gave conflicting features as appropriate retribution for such heresy. At his camp at Sambhal the Sultan convened an assembly of the empire's leading Ulema. The result was that Lodhan was imprisoned, instructed in Islam and after he refused to convert, was executed. Persecution, however, did not silence the bhaktas and saints and they continued to increase both in number and significance.

From his very childhood, Kabir developed a deep insight into Divine wisdom. Developing stage by stage, an intense desire from knowing the secret of life, he had to pass through periods of agitated suspense and restlessness. The quench of his thirst for Divine love, he had to contact sublimated personalities who could help him understanding the truth about God and life. His close contact with spiritual guides turned him into a spiritual figure of his time. 1

Kabir is believed to have been illiterate and it is certain that he himself never communicated anything writing. His teachings were mainly oral which were generally memorized by his disciples after they had been uttered and then written down immediately or soon afterwards. His own verse is quoted for his lack of formal education.

1. Unpublished Article of Dr. Mansoor Alom, p.3

I did not touch ink and paper;

Nor a pen in hand did I hold

Essence of four ages wisdom

By words of mouth I did unfold.¹

He said, "I am not skilled in book knowledge nor do I understand controversy."

His utterance took the form of popular couplets. But due to his God gifted talent he became one of the most influential figures of North India and has been hailed as the Father of Hindi literature. His spiritual growth and mystical poetry equally guided by the sufi poetry of the great Persian mystics like Rumi, Sa'di, Hafiz and others. Although born and brought up in a Muslim family, Kabir found the means to initiate himself in sacred texts of the Hindus. In his early years he appears to have been influenced by the teachings of Gosai Astanand, a Hindu saint of Banaras. In his advance age he came in contact with a Hindu preacher Ramananda Bairagi (1299-1370) and undertook strenuous mystical disciplinary exercises, learnt the Vedanta philosophy in a modified and more acceptable form and studied the art of Indian Muslim saints. Kabir was a disciple of Shaikh Taqi Suhrawardi. The author of the Miratul Asrar (mirror of the secrets) says that Makhdum was Kabir's another spiritual guide who trained him in sufi doctrines. Besides, Kabir travelled place to place in search of the truth and came in contact with many Sufis and saints and took training in mystical doctrines and thoughts under them. He felt free to

1. Unpublished Article of Dr. Mansoor Alom, p.3

discuss the profundity of human existence and aspirations and expressed his ideas with them. In respect of his spiritual training Dr. Tarachand writes:

"He (Kabir) did not remain long with his teacher, for tradition finds him soon after wandering from place to place and associating with ascetics and saints, He spent considerable time in the company of Muslim Saints of which he speaks in a Ramaini, " Manipur was the dwelling place of Kabir, where for long he listened Shaikh Taqi. The same teaching he heard at Jaunpur and the Jhansi (near Allahabad). He learnt the names of Pirs (Muslim preceptor). In that place they have record of twenty one pirs who read the prayers (khutba in the name of the prophet."

Kabir did not confine his spiritual training to Muslim preachers only. As stated above, he certainly was influenced by Ramananda, though according to Tarachand, "Ramananda passes out of Kabir's legends quite early and leaves only a shady impression upon the development of his ideas." However being fully equipped with both Islamic and Hindu mysticism, Kabir started propagating his thoughts and views through Hindi poetry and left to his credit a vast literature of his sayings in the form of Dohas, Sakhis, Ramainis and aphorism. He spoke the language of the ordinary people, infusing with brightness of his realization. In many popular verses, Kabir exhorts the supreme help afforded by a true master and praises the devotion in the disciple. His simple compositions were easy to remember and became popular immensely and enabled to grasp essentials of simple spiritual life. His utterances shaped the lives of countless members of human race and embodied the wisdom of essentially philosophic age. "The marvelous flashes of his poetry light up even the darkest canvas of human and transport it to a supreme height of bliss and ecstasy."

He communicated something through his utterances that has attracted spiritual seekers from almost every religion in the world, for hundreds of years.¹

According to some works written by Kabir panthis Kabir's knowledge of Islam, compared to that of Hinduism, appears to be superficial and wanting in accuracy, but as pointed out by Dr. Yusuf Husain. Kabir's teaching does not give preference to either Hinduism or Islam. He admires all that is good in the two cults and condemns all that is dogmatic. The cult which Kabir preached and propagated was mainly adopted by the Hindus of lower classes. They were galvanized in to life by a new spiritual message of Kabir where life and teachings represents the great synthesis of Bhaktia Yoga on the one and Hindu pantheism and Islamic mysticism on the other. With Hinduism as the background of his thought and influenced Muslim Sufi saints and poets, kabir preached a religion of love which would promote unity among all classes of people. Indian Vedanta and Islamic Mysticism mingled in him in such a way that it became difficult to distinguish from one another. His teachings touched the soul of Hindus and Muslims, although at the same time, it brought upon him the wrath of the orthodox pundits and Mullahs. In spite of oppositions from the communities Kabir sought to unite the conflicting streams of Hindus and Muslims by spirituals.

Teachings and thought of Kabir are reflected in his poetry, which "is a shinning mantle woven of conviction and faith which address human character." His simple compositions Doha or chantic are complete in themselves and are considered the

1. Unpublished Article of Dr Mansoor Ajom,p. 6

best part of Hindi literature. His Bijak (invoice) is accepted as the most authentic record of his teachings. Although the language of Bijak, which was spoken in the neighborhood of Banaras and Gorakhpur, but contains more than 235 words of Persian and Arabic and Turkish. The importance of Kabir lies on the fact that his more than 500 verses are now the part of the Holly Granth, sacred text of the Sikhs. There is profound wisdom hidden in each couplet and they reflect Kabir's way of expressing the most profound thoughts on the simplest words. What makes Kabir's poetry great is the depth of his personal spiritual experiences and dignity of thought which he wants to convey in a very simple language and non- conventional way.¹

The hallmark of Kabir's poetry is that he conveys in his two line verses (dohas) what other may not be able to do in many pages. Another beauty of Kabir's poetry is that he picks up situations that sorrowed our daily lives. His poetry is relevant and helpful in guiding and regulating our lives. For example he says'

Chatti Chakki Dekh kar, Diya Kabira Roye

Du patan ke beech mein sabit bacha na koye

(Looking at the grinding stones, Kabir laments

In the duel of wheel nothing stays intact)²

One of the chief characteristics of Kabir's poetry is that he did not care for the "Composed in Magadhi or Ardha dialecet of the 14th century, the soft cadences of the Banis (Lyrics) of Kabir are chemically pose in their simplicity and

1.Unpublished Article of Dr Mansoor Alom,p. 7

2.ibid, 7-8

language of the sophisticated in those days, namely Sanskrit or court language Persian but composed his verses and songs in a mixed language of his own which is now called by Hindi scholars Sadhukari (language of Sadhus) G.N. Das writes:- "transparency of the large truth to touch and move any human heart worth name"¹ Regarding the salient feature of Kabir's poetry Hyden Carruth says in his articles entitled, "Kabir, By Marwin that "Kabir's mystical poem are natural, full of moons, trees, water, cities, music; compressed but light, sometimes even humorous; sometimes also spontaneously ironic or bitter." The popularity of Kabir lies in the fact that poet like Rabindranath Tagore translated his songs and introduced him to the world outside India. His translations are typical and retain the essential simplicity to his otherwise complex thought.

That Kabir was influenced by Muslims Sufis and poets and like them he also preached Love, Humanism, Universal brotherhood, is described by Dr. Tarachand in these words:

"The expressions of Kabir's teachings was shaped by that by Sufi saints and poets. In the Hindi language he had no precursor, and the only models, which he could follow were the Muslim one e.g. the Pand Nama of Firdausi; a comparison of the headings of the poems of both brings that out clearly. He must also have heard the poems of Jalal-al-Din Rumi and Sadi besides the teachings of other Sufis, for there are echoes of them in his works".²

1. Unpublished Article of Dr Mansoor Alom,p. 8

2. ibid.

Kabir played the role of a teacher and social reformer by the medium of his writings, which mainly consisted of the two line verses called Dohas. He had a strong belief in Vedanta, Sufism, Vaishanvism and Nath Sampradaya.

He is one of the medieval saints of Bhakti and Sufi movement whose compositions figure in Sikhs scripture the Guru Granth Shahib. From among all of them Kabir's contribution is the largest, 227 Padas in 17 Ragas and 237 Slokas. Under each Raga or musical modes marking a section of the Holy Book, Kabir's Hymns appear at the head of Bhagat Bani, a generic name for the works of contribution other than the Gurus. The presence of a substantial amount of Kabir's verse in the Sikh scripture and chronologically he being the predecessor of Guru Nanak, founder of the Sikh faith led some western scholars to describe him as the forerunner of Sikhism. Some have even called him the preceptor of Guru Nanak. There is, however, ample evidence to prove that Guru Nanak and Kabir had ever met their periods of time infact do not coincide. Kabir's compositions do figure in what are known as the Bhaktas prepared in the time of Guru Amar Das, Nanak iii rd. They were included in the Guru Granth Sahib as well but these happened much later when Guru Arjan, 5th in spiritual line from the founder, compiled the Holy Book. Besides his own works and those of his four predecessors, he entered in it hymns of some saints and mystics, both Hindu and Muslim, Kabir was one of them.

Kabir through his couplets not only reformed the mindset of common villagers and low cast people but give them self confidence to question Brahmins. It was hundred years after him that Tulsi das broke the hegemony of Brahmins by writing Ram Charitra Manas. A poem of Ramayana at Banaras which went against the

tradition of Brahmins. Kabir was in fact first person to go against Brahmins and be so successful. Banaras was devastated by an attack by a Muslim invader Tamur Lang or "Taimur the Lame" during his time. Kabir also denounced Mullahs and their rituals of bowing towards Kaba five times a day. Because of open condemnation of established and popular religions, Kabir became an object of the wrath of both Hindus and Muslims in and around Banaras. Kabir travelled in and around Banaras to preach his beliefs.¹

Kabir believed in self surrender and God's Bhakti. The Kabir panthis follow a rule of singing the praises of God, prayers and a simple and pure life of devotion. Kabir recommends ceaseless singing of God's praises. He virtually suggest withdrawal from the world. He is against all ritualistic and ascetic methods as means to salvation. It is true that Kabir refers to some yogic terms in describing the meditational and mystic methods of the Yogis. But, there is no ground to suggest that he himself recommends the Yogic path. In fact, far from recommending Yoga, he is quite strong in condemning ascetics or Yogic methods, and says that Yogis, in their meditations, become prey to maya. The point will, however be considered further while comparing radical Bhakti with Nathism. The moral tone is quite strong in Kabir's hymns. "Kabir deck thyself with garments of love. Love them is given honour whose body and soul speak the truth." "The Ruby of goodness is greater than all the minds of Rubies, all the wealth of three worlds resides in the goodness of heart. When the wealth of contentment is won, all other wealth is as dust." Where

1. <http://www.sikh-history.com/sikhist/events/kabir.html>

there is mercy there is strength, where there is forgiveness there is He." "The man who is kind and practices righteousness, who remains passive in the affairs of the world, who considers creatures of the world as his own self, he attains the immortal Being; the true God is ever with him. Kabir suggest inward worship and remembrance of God. For him, true worship is only inwards. Put on the rosary inward. By counting beads, the world will be full of lights. He clearly suggest moral discrimination between good and bad deeds. What can the helpless road do, when the traveler does not walk understandingly what can one do, if, with lamp in hand one falls in the well" "or goes astray with open eyes. Discern you now between good and evil."¹

It is not surprising that Kabir's satire was brought to bear not simply on the vices and weaknesses of man but reached through and beyond them to the very System themselves. It was the authority of Vedas and Quran that more than the authority of Brahmin or Qazi which Kabir attacked he rebelled against the pretension of resolving by the means of books or by way of authority, the mystery of human condition and the problem of liberation(Moksha). He spent his last forty days living in a place where it was believed that if you die you will born as a Donkey in next life.

Kabir is a firm advocate of Ahimsa. His doctrine extends even to the non destruction of flower. "The life of the living you strike dead and you say yours

1.<http://www.sikh-history.com/sikhist/events/kabir.html>

slaughter makes it dedicated. It is blood haunting you and those who taught you." "They fast all day and at night they slaughter the cow, here murder, their devotion; how can these please God? O' Qazi, by whose order doth thou use thy knife." "When you declare the sacrifice of an animal as your religion what else is sin. If you regard yourself a saint whom will call a butcher?" "The goat eats grass and is skinned, what will happen to those who eat (goats) meat?" do not kill poor jiva, murder will not be forgiven even if you hear a million puranas. Among the fifty commandments laid down for the followers of kabir, vegetarianism is one of them. For Kabir, moral life involves adherence to Ahimsa.¹

In common with all monastic, ascetic or other worldly sects, Kabir does not think well of women. There is almost a tirade against them in the hymns of Kabir. Women is characterized as "a black cobra", the pit of hell and the refuse of the world. "She is considered to be a hurdle in the path of the spiritual progress of men. He spoke, "Women ruins everything when comes near a man, devotion, salvation, divine knowledge no longer enter his soul". His view, about woman are also evident from al his vehement attacks against Maya. Almost everywhere he links Maya to a woman who is out to entice and entrap man, and destroy his spiritual life. Such views about woman from a married person are, indeed, quite uncommon. The cosmological views of Kabir gave a clear clue to his world view. He finds Niranjana

1.<http://www.sikh-history.com/sikhists/events/kabir.html>

to be the creator of the world, Maya or woman. And this woman stands between man and God. She is there to entice him away from him.¹

Kabir composed no systematic treatises, rather his works consists of many short didactic poems, often expressed in terse vigorous language in the form of Padas, Dohas and Ramainis (forms of poetry in Indian languages). Besides his works recorded in 1604 A.D. in Guru Granth Shahib by Guru Arjandev and preserved inviolate since, two other collections exists- Kabir Granthawali and Bijak. In his poems he was quick to tell the illustrations of moral and spiritual truth in the incidents of everyday life and many of his similes' and metaphors are very striking.

1.<http://www.sikh-history.com/sikhist/events/kabir.html>

CHAPTER -II

**Socio- Religious Studies during the Times of
Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi and Kabir**

Socio-Religious Study of Rumi's age

The thirteenth century which brought, with the invasion of the Mongols, the most tremendous shock to Asia and Europe also great period of mysticism, not only in Islam and in Christianity, but also in India where the Bhakti movement had made great studies. Ramanuja, a southern Brahmin of the twelfth century, recognized Vishnu as identical with Brahma, the supreme spirit, animating material world as well as the individual souls which have become estranged from God through unbelief, and can attain conscious union with Him again only through devotion or love, i.e. Bhakti.

By the middle of the 13th century mystic thought both in prose and verse, had reached its final. Since this development, in the mystic thought had taken place in Muslim lands in the same generation which saw the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate, mystic ideology was imparted into India bodily in its develop from India had much to contribute by developing the mystic silsila.

The Spiritual Silsila (orders) were effectively organized to meet the situation and khanqas, which henceforth became an integral part of the mystic discipline, were established on an extensive scale.

1. The Christi order: Khawaja Abu Ishaq Shami Chisti is regarded as the founder of this order. He migrated from Asia Minor and settled at Chisti in Khurasan and in consequence was called Chisti. He was a disciple and a vicegerent of Mimshed 'Ali Dinwari'.

1. Life and Work of Muhammad Jalal-ud-Din Rumi, by Afzal Iqbal, p. 13

The devotees of this order practice Chilla, i.e. they shut themselves up for forty days in some room or pass the time in mosque. During this period they eat little food and spend the greater part of the night and day in prayer and meditation, nor do they talk with others more than is absolutely necessary. Another characteristic of the followers of this order is their fondness for music. They hold musical festivals, and pass into ecstasy while listening to singing.¹

2. The Qadiri Order: the order, as we have seen, sprung from Khanwada Tartawsiyya, and traces its origin to Abdu'l- Qadir Gilani or Jilani. Abdu'l Qadir is also called Hasanu'l- Husayni, on account of his descendant of his descent, on his mother's side from Husayn and his father's side from Hasan, Muhammad's grandson.² He had forty nine sons, who carried on his work after his death. His most devoted followers went so far as to ascribe to him powers almost divine. This order has separate Zawiyyas (cleisters), and a central institution in Baghdad. These dervishes are known for their philosophic principles and main order of the Qadiriya has produced many subsidiary branches and dervishes of this school are to be found spread over Islam from Morocco to Malaysia.³

3. Suhrawardi Order: This order is founded by Shihab al Din suhrawardi, a persian by birth, and well known as a writer of Sufism, who died in A.H. 632 (A.D.

1. An Introduction to Sufism, origin, philosophy and Development, by Masood Ali Khan, S.Ram. p.81

2. Ibid. p.81

3. Rabiya Basri, The Mystic and Her Follow saints in Islam, by Margaret Smith, p, 18

1234-35). He represents the pantheistic development of Sufism, and his teachings are purely mystical. The adherents of this school are found chiefly in Persia and India.¹

4. Maulavi Order: an order which had its origin in Asia Minor is that of the Maulavi, founded by the great Sufi poet Jalal al -Din Rumi, born in Balkh, who died at Konya in A.H. 672 (A.D. 1273). They are known as the ' Breathers of Love'. Because the whole principle of the order has been the love of God.,the headship of the Mevlevi order is still in the family of Jalal-al Din and it still has its headquarters at Konia.²

5. Khalwatiyya order: an order of considerable importance found mainly in the east of the Islamic world is that of the Khalwatiyya, who derive their name from their practice of going into retreat. This practice was undoubtedly derived from the Christian recluses, and was adopted by the leaders of the mystic orders for themselves and their disciples as being more adopted than any other means for releasing complete sanctification in this life, and the absorption of the individuality of man in the Essence of God. Junayd, who died at Baghdad in A.H. 198 (A.D. 910-11), is said to have founded an order in these lines, but the real founder of the existent order was one ' Umaral- Khaluti, also a Persian, who died A.H. 800 (A.D. 1397). The adherents of this order are ascetics and mystics, practicing retreats and great austerities. they have spread beyond Persian into Asia Minor, European Turkey, the Hijaz and the Indies.³

1. Rabiya Basri, The Mystic and Her Fellow saints in Islam, by Margaret Smith, p, 187

2.ibid,187

3. ibid, 187

6. The Naqshabandi Order: the origin of this order is generally ascribed to Khawaja Baha'ud-Din Naqshaband, who died in Persia, in 1389 A.D. The word naqshaband literally means an embroiderer or printer on cloth, and as applied to Bahau'd-Din, probably refers to his ancestral profession. Another explanation , however is given by a Muslim writer whom Rose quotes: " this people (ta'ifa) polish the exterior of their minds and intellects with pictures, and being from the rust and wiles of life are not of those who are captivated by vain colouring of the world as varied as those of the changeful chameleon; and as Naqshaband drew incomparable pictures of the Divine Science and painted figures of Eternal Invention, which are not imperceptible, his followers became celebrated by little of the Naqshbandies, 'The painters'. 1

1. An Introduction to Sufism, Origin, Philosophy and Development, Masood Ali Khan, S. Ram ,p. 87

Socio-Religious Studies of Kabir's Age

The religious climate of North-India during the early medieval period was characterized by the predominance and popularity of three major factors, namely the precepts of the Advaita Vedanta, tantricism, and Yogic practices with high concentration of Hatha-Yoga). The Advaita Vedanta had acquired a unique status in the eighth century and after. Besides finding general acceptance within the Brahmanic fold, its influence had penetrated deep into the Buddhist and Jaina traditions as well. The tantrika beliefs and practices were imbibed by Hindu as well as Buddhist groups. Hatha yoga had assumed a popular form and had led to the formation of important sects which were predominantly yogic in character. Out of the three factors mentioned above, the first shows continued vitality, whereas the other two show signs of either decline or transformation, caused by some form of extremism or another. The licentiousness that had crept into tantricism affected the measures of its popularity, leading to its final decay. Too much emphasis on the physical aspects of yoga caused the need for a reversal to its meditative aspects, and also for the transformation of the yogic sects which had initially concentrated most on Hatha-Yoga. During the later medieval period, the two forces that finally retained their popularity in North-India were the ideology of the Advaita Vedanta and the contemplative aspects of the Yogic tradition. 1

1. Bhakti and the Bhakti Movement, A New Perspective, A Study in the History of Ideas, by Krishna Sharma, p. 19.

A unique and significant development of the medieval period was the meeting of the Astika and the nastika traditions on a large scale. Kabir's Nirguna School was very much the product of this trend also. Although there had been much interaction between the two earlier, and although there is evidence of mutual assimilation of precepts and practices on both sides, the two had followed separate courses till then, without any instance of one merging or getting transformed into the other. Such a merger and transformation is first seen in the emergence of the Natha-Pantha, and later, in the Nirguna school of Bhakti. The Natha was an offshoot of nastika tradition of the Buddhist Siddhas. But it had upheld many astika values as well. The transformation of the Buddhist Siddha tradition into the Natha pantha came about when Gorakshantha tried to cleanse the former of the tantrika elements by replacing them with the Yogic. His preference for yoga was coupled with astika beliefs in the existence of an eternal Reality (which was clearly rejected in Buddhism) and a broad acceptance of the monistic philosophy. Gorakshanta had also incorporated the cult of siva-worship in his sect which brought the natha-Pantha close to the Saivite sects. These features of the Natha-Pantha, gave it the character of an astika sect in spite of the fact that it had stemmed from the Nastika Buddhist Siddha tradition. Nevertheless, it had retained certain residues of its nastika background as well. The heterogeneous character of the Natha literature is a good indicator of this sect. On the one hand, we have the Natha texts in Sanskrit (the orthodox literary medium for religious writings), and on the other, a sizeable number of verses composed in the different vernaculars of the North. The former must have been for the consumption

of the Brahmins and for giving the sect an honourable status; the later were obviously meant for the means and for popularizing the Natha teachings. 1

The schools of Kabir presents a similar kind of phenomenon of a dynamic combination of the astika and nastika elements. His religion was based on monistic ideas and an impersonal concept of God which had been part and parcel of the astika tradition from the Upanisadic times. But his attitude of questioning the established religious norms and mores, and of rejecting them by the use of reason, shows the influence of the nastikas. His severe attack on the caste system, idol-worship, and ritualism were possible only by adopting the unorthodox spirit of the nastikas. Similarly, his use of the spoken language for communicating ideas, which were conveyed earlier only through the medium of Sanskrit, was also in keeping with the nastika tradition.

There is correct link between the medieval school of Nirguna Bhakti and Natha Pantha. The connecting link is Kabir. The influence of the Natha Pantha on Kabir is generally recognized fact by now. Nevertheless, further exploration is still required regarding the interconnecting between the Buddhist Siddhas and the Natha- Pantha, and between the Natha Pantha and kabir's movement, for determining the antecedents of the one mentioned last. A clearer understanding of the process of transformation and transmutation of the first two; and of the points of differentiation

1.Bhakti and the Bhakti Movement, A New Perspective, A Study in the History of Ideas, by Krishna Sharma, p. 19-20

of all three, is important in this regard. Gorakshatha had caused the transmutation of the Siddha practices by launching a religious movement in a new direction; Kabir had served a similar purpose in relation to the Natha- Pantha. If the Siddha tradition had lost its vigour because of the preponderance of tantrika practices, the Natha- Pantha had faced a similar crisis on account of its extreme emphasis on the Hatha- Yoga. The Natha-Pantha, in its decadent stages, had turned into a sect in which the physical aspects of Yoga and the external life style of a yogi had become ends in themselves. Such a development could undermine the importance of the attitude of the mind and heart in religious pursuits. Kabir replaced the importance of Hatha- Yoga with that of the emotive element of Bhakti in his school. Since Kabir have been under the influence of the Natha Pantha, he did use the terminology of Hatha- Yoga in his verses. But if a total view is taken of his ideas on Yoga, they are related more to the discipline of the mind than that of the body. He concentrated more on the state of the Dhayana or constant remembrance, in achieving which, the Yoga of the body is meant to serve only as a help- mate.¹

Kabir lived in the fifteenth century after Christ which was a time of great political upheaval in India. As is true of many contemporary religious teachers, very little reliable information concerning Kabir's life is available, though there is no dearth of legend gathering around him. Kabir's life was centered around Kashi, also called Banaras (Varanasi). Legend has it that he was actually the son of a Brahmin widow

1. Bhakti and the Bhakti Movement, A New Perspective, A Study in the History of Ideas, by Krishna Sharma, p. 21

who abandoned him and that he was found by a Muslim weaver named Niru, he adopted the boy and taught him the weaver's trade. It is not clear whether he ever married, but tradition gives him a wife named Loi and two children. His cast was that of Julaha and from his sayings his caste's hereditary occupation of weaving. On the basis of modern research, it seems probable that Kabir belonged to a family of non -celibate Yogis converted, not long before into a considerable degree superficially to Islam. From the writings of Kabir it seems that his knowledge of Islam was slight rather in his poetical utterances (Bani) a wealth of Hatha Yoga terminology and although structure which bears obvious resemblance to Nath Yogis. Nath yogis in addition to the Yogic conception that all truth is experimental, i.e. to be realized within the body with the aid of psychophysical practices, concentration, control of breathing thus making the body incorruptible and the Yogis immortal.

In fifteenth century Banaras was the seat of Brahmin orthodoxy and their learning center. Brahmins had strong hold on all the spheres of life in this city. Thus Kabir belonging to a low caste of Julaha had to go through immense tough time of preaching his ideology. Kabir and his followers would gather at one place in the city and meditate. Brahmins ridiculed him for preaching to prostitutes and the low castes. Kabir satirically denounced Brahmins and thus won hearts of people around him. There is no doubt that single most famous important person from the city of Banaras today is none other than saint Kabir.

Kabir through his couplets not only reforms the mindset of common villagers and low caste people but give themselves confidence to question Brahmins. It was hundred years after him that Tulsidas broke the hegemony of Brahmins by writing

Ram Charitra Manas, a poem of Ramayana at Banaras which went against the tradition of Brahmin. Kabir was infact first person to get against Brahmins and be so successful. Banaras was devastated by an attack by Muslim invader Tamur Lang or Tamur the dame during his time. Kabir also denounced Mullahs and the rituals of bowing towards Kaba five times a day. Because of open condemnation of a established popular religion, Kabir became an object of the wrath of both Hindus and Muslims in and around Banaras to preach his beliefs.¹

In the early medieval period there is hardly any place for jyana and karma in Bhakti in the orthodox sense. Among the followers of the Bhakti form of worship, highest bliss centres round the attainment of the personal God. In the Bhagavata and post Bhagavata period there is emotion of awe in the devotee. It is passionate devotion for personal God which becomes characteristics of Bhakti in India religious Radha appears in the north Indian inscriptions. Her emergence carries further the intrinsic energy. Vaishnava devotees gained the satisfaction of blissful enjoyment of the divine spots. The Saivites too expressed the unqualified devotion for Siva.

During the period under review a few dominant characteristics of Bhakti in Indian religious thought may be noted. The Brahma Sutra was commented upon by Ramanuja, Madhava, Nimbarka and Vishnusvamin(Vallabhacharya) to expound the philosophy of love and piety or Bhakti. Vigorous efforts were directed against the idealistic monism of Sankara, who postulated the sole reality of an attribute less and

1. <http://www.hinduwebside.com/sacredscripts/other/life.kabir>

unconditional Brahman. In their efforts they succeeded in making a distinction between the devotee and the deity. All of them believed in the Saguna of Brahman. The logic of Madhava can be followed from his statement in the Karma-Nirnaya. He says, "Reason also be adduced to show that Brahman should be conceived as Saguna. It should possess attributes like omniscience in so far as it is creator of everything in the universe. Creatorship pre-supposes full knowledge of the effect to be, its accessories, nature of effort, the expected result, and the putting forth of necessary will and effort to accomplish the word. It follows that the all- creator must be all- knowing, all powerful and capable of accomplishing whatever the wills. This is what "Sagma" stands for "Vaishnavas" of north and south India held Jnana as a constituent of Bhakti. They also were not in favour of the caste system. Devotion, and not caste, was necessary for earning the love of God. Bhakti egalitarianism is the characteristic of Saivites, Vaishnavites, Nath- Yogis and the non- Smarta followers of northern India.¹

Ramananda did away the insular social behavior of the Hindus by throwing his spiritual door wide open for members of all castes. The observance of caste rule was not necessary for devotion to God. Religion now became a question of faith, emotion and devotion. As a result of his teaching a member of the despised class could reach his God without an intermediary. Ramananda called his disciples avadhuts (the emancipated ones), as they had liberated themselves from the fetters of social disciplines. But Anantatnauda, Kabir, Pipa, Ramananda, sukha, Sursura,

1. Society and Culture in Medieval India. By A. Rashid, p.240

Padmavati, Naravari, Ravidas, Dhanna, Sadhna and the wife of Sursura were the famous twelve disciples.

Some of his disciples belonged to lower caste Dhanna was a jat peasant of Rajputana. Sadhna was a barber at the court of the king of Bandhangarh, modern Rewa. Ravidas was a choonar (shoe maker). Ramananda broadened the intellect of inequality. He counted among his disciples a Rajput queen. The origin of the Nagas, who were ascetics and practiced seclusion, and the Samyogis, who married and lived together. They mostly belonged to the Sudra caste, but some wore the triple cord of the high classs Hindu, and styled themselves as Gour Brahmans.

According to the Bhaushya Purana, Ramananda took back into the Hindu fold many people who were converted to Islam. These re-converts were called Samyogis (the reunited). Some historians hold that Ramananda did give up caste- distincetion altogether. But others opine that "it was only certain of the religious restrictions of caste that were relaxed." Ramananda in his Ananda Bhashya does not recognize the right of Sudra to read the Vedas. "And in matters of social concern, he could not be expected to caste off the sense of superiority of a Hindu over a Mohammadan and of one belonging to regenerate classes (dwijas) over a Sudra. It was left to Kabir, a Muslim disciple of Ramananda, in whom the new thought found its full expression."

Authentic historical records confirm that Kabir lived between 14th and 15th centuries A.D. Kabir's age was full of struggles and confusion. Politically, Muslims clashed with Hindus and established their own kingdoms. Intense fight took place between Muslims Sultans and Hindu kings, as a result which there was no peace in the country. Owing to the different traditional, cultural and religious customs, there

arose enmity between Hindus and Muslims and they were fighting each other. In that critical situation Kabir struggled for the unity between Hindus and Muslims, in which he faced many difficulties.

At the time of Kabir, a kind despair spread throughout the country. Owing to the unstable political conditions violence spread all over the country. Small kings and the land-lords were acting according to their own will. There was no limit to their atrocities. Due to the famine and scarcity, people suffered a lot. In those circumstances, the idea of religious reformation occurred in the minds of the people, as a result of which a number of new religious traditions emerged. The philosophy of "Nirguna Brahmopasana" was an important trend then, which spread among the people.¹

With the emergence of Islam in India, Hinduism received a rude shock. The Muslim ruler not only crushed a number of religious movements and temples of Hindus, but also tried to convert people to Islam by extending them certain concessions. Due to this, Hinduism started losing its importance in the society and on the other hand people belonging to the lower castes were attracted to Islam. Hindus were unable to follow and perform their religious customs. They were not in a position to express their devotion to their religion. They were unable to protect themselves and even their self-respect.

The Hindu rulers of Rajasthan and Vijayanagara seeing a serious threat to the existence of Hinduism turned champions of the Hindu Dharma. With a view to

1. Society and Culture in Medieval India. By A. Rashid, p.244

saving Hinduism and modifying it to the changed circumstances, the Hindu saints and philosophers took upon themselves the task of reforming Hinduism. These saints and reformers tried to purify Hinduism of all evil practices, particularly caste system and image worship and thereby started a movement which is popularly known as Bhakti Movement.

At the time of Kabir, there were a number religious, preaching different dharmas, traditions and methods, but they were contradictory and inter twisted. In those days every religion was divided into different branches. The followers of each religion considered their religion unique and superior to other religions. Nath panth, Saivism, Vaishnavism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sufism and Islam were the important religions of those days. No religion was tolerant towards other religions. According to Dr. Govinda Trigunayat's analysis, in those days there obtained two trends among the people (i) Theism and Atheism, and (ii) Bhakti Marga proposed by different religious teachers.

According to Dr. Govinda Trigunayat, the second trend that came into being in that period was Bhakti Tarwa. Basing themselves on the Vedas and Upanishads, the religious teachers of that time propagated Bhakti.

Before Kabir, Sufism was in a good position in Iran. The famous mystic poet Jalaluddin (1207 A.D.) of Iran preached mysticism and sacred life among the Muslims. The greatness of mysticism propagated by Jalaluddin attracted many people. As a result many new traditions and sects took birth in this faith. The chief sects of Sufism were Chistee and Suhravardhee. The Chistee was propagated by Quaja Moinuddin Chistee in the 12th century A.D. and the second sect by Bahauddin

Zakaria. Before Kabir, Sufi tradition had spread all over the country and influenced the people of India. Kabir also came under its influence.

Religious Enmity

The enmity between Hinduism and Islam was also one of the reasons for religious instability during that period. Muslims invaded India chiefly attracted by her wealth, but later on they established kingdoms and started religious propagation. Religious tolerance was marked between Hindus and Muslims. Philosophically, and culturally these religions were different. All Muslims were to adhere to the Quran. Those who disobeyed its codes were called kaphir (atheist). According to their view, Islam was the only true religion in this world. Muslims rebuked idol worship of the Hindus and the custom or praying to many Gods. Muslims believed only in ekeswaropasana of the Muslims. There were other differences also. Hindus believed in caste system, whereas Hindus called Muslims opposed it. From the Islamic point of view, Hindus were kaphirs, whereas Hindus called Muslims mlechchas. Political power was in hands of Muslims; so they oppressed Hindus in different ways. The clash and enmity between these two religions painted Kabir much. He tried for unity and harmony between Hinduism and Islam, throughout his life.

CHAPTER - III

Sufism and Bhaktism : Similarity and Dissimilarity

Sufism and Bhaktism : Similarity and Dissimilarity

Sufism and Bhakti:

Mysticism in the world is as old as its hills. Adam was perhaps the first who had direct illumination; and that without an effect on his part, (zalik fauz lullahi yutihi man yashu wallahu zul Fadlil-Azim.) this is the grace of God which bestows on whomsoever he likes. There is a kind of Mysticism, which is the result of acquisition (in Allaha la yuziu ajral muminin) ¹

Sufism is the form which Mysticism had taken in Islam. The term Sufism embraces the philosophy and practices in Islam which aims at direct communion between God and man. ²

The Sufis trace the origin of Tasawwuf to the prophet of Islam himself. All the religious orders trace their lines of succession back to him. It is believed that the relations received by the prophet were two-dimensional-one was in the form of divine inspiration within his heart. The former was meant for all, while the latter was to be imparted to the chosen few through a line of succession that is from heart to heart. "Back knowledge"- of the words of the Quran and Hadith-was known as Ilm-e-Safina, while "heart-Knowledge" was known as Ilm-e- Sina. ³

The knowledge of the wonders of the Quran and Hadith was passed on from one generation to another by the religious scholars or Ulama while the knowledge of the heart was by those called Sufis.

1. Studies In Tasawuf by khaja Khan, p. 131

2. A Simple Guide to Sufism, by Farida Khanam, p. 7

3. A Simple Guide to Sufism, by Farida Khanam, p. 9

The claim of Sufis that Tsaswwuf originated from the life of the prophet and his companions seems to have some basis in fact. The prophet led an extremely simple life. He avoided all luxuries. He would pray to God for major portion of the night (Quran 73: 20) whatever valuable present he received he immediately disposed of in charity. Even when he had conquered Arabia, he did not possess more than an ordinary mattress to sleep on and a pitcher to keep water in. He fasted continuously for months continuously for months together and slept little at night.

Thus the prophet committed himself to religion in both theory and practice at a deeper level.

There are also traditions which tell us that the prophet discouraged people from spending all their time in ritual worship and not taking interest in worldly activities.¹

Sufis have always laid emphasis on Safa that is purification. The Quran has this to say: He indeed shall be successful who purifies himself. (87:14) He will indeed be successful who purifies his soul, and he will indeed fail who corrupts his soul.(91: 9-10)

There comes a stage where man's will becomes one with the divine will. And there is the type of man who gives his life to seek the pleasure of God. And God is full of kindness to his servants. (20: 207)²

1. A Simple Guide to Sufism, by Farida Khanam . p.10

2.ibid

Origin of Sufism

There is various opinions regarding the etymology term of Sufism. Among the Mohammadan, Sufism, or Persian Mysticism, is known as Tasawwaf. The word Sufi is derived from Suf, meaning "wool". When a little Persian sect at the end of the eight century A.D. broke away from the orthodox Muslim religion, and struck out on an independent path, they ignored costly robes and worldly ostentation, and clad themselves in a white wool garment. Hence they were known as "wool wearers," or Sufis.¹

Sufi, it is a noun from means wool, a piece of wool or cloth or the cross of threads of god s A Sufi, one of the peculiar sects of Mohammadan devotees so called. They are said to be freethinker or Pantheists in matter of religion outwardly. They conform to the Mohammadan creed, but are looked upon with great suspicious by the more orthodox.²

The derivation of the name Sufis (Mohammadan Mysticism) was a long subject of dispute. Most Sufis favours the theory that it is derived from 'Safa'. Safa means purity and that Sufi is one of the elects who had become purified from all worldly defilements. Another would connect it with 'Saff' means rank, as though the Sufis were spiritually is the first rank in virtue of his communion with God.³

1. Rumi, The Persian Mystics, by F. Hadland Davis. P.1

2. A Dictionary of Urdu, Classical Hindi and English, Oxford University, 1930, by Platts John. T.A. p. 747

3. Encyclopedia of religion and Ethics,Hastings, James, vol.xii, p. 10

It is also connected with 'Suffa' means bench, referring the origin of Sufism to the 'Ahl al-Suffa' or 'Ashab-e-Suffa' means people of bench. In the early age of Islam, a certain poor Muslim who took shelter in the proch or varanda of the Mosque of prophet Muhammad (S.A) i.e. Masjid Nabawwi. They used to assemble there and are famous in the history of Islam as Suffa meaning a raised place. It was a center of learning and teaching and the companions of Muhammad (S: A) were always busy in discussing the philosopher of Islam. In the history of Islam, generally they were 'Suf' (wool), hence they came to be known as Ahl-i- Suffa or Alshab-i-Suffa. They also were pious and laid great stress on the principle of (i) kubeh (repentances)(ii). Twkl (trust or reliance) and (iii) sabr (patience). They despised this world and laid another life, motto and culture of Ashab-i-Suffa are called Sufi.¹

The author of the oldest extant Arabic treatise on Sufism, Abu Nasr al Saraj declares that in his opinion (which naturally is not based on philosophical grounds) the Sufi is derived from 'Sufi' means wool for the woolen raiment is the habit of the Prophets and the bondage of the Saints and elect as appears in many traditions and narrative.²

The origin of the name 'Sufi' is explained by the Sufis themselves in many different Ways, but of the derivation which have been proposed only three possesses any claim for consideration viz. those which connect it with Sophia (wisdom) or with Safa (purity) or with 'Suf' (wool). According to Bashr-al- Hafi (d.841-43) the

1. Literary History of Arab, by R.A.Nicholson. New Delhi; p.229

2. Kitabul- Luma (English translation) by R.A. Nicholson, p.20

very name of Sufi is derived from Arabic root 'Safa' purity. The sufi is one who keeps his heart pure with God.

The very name of Sufism is derived from the root 'Suf' means wool. As the Sufis wear woolen robe to distinguish themselves from others, they came to be known as Sufi.

The origin of the name "Sufi" is explained by the Sufis themselves in many different ways, but of the derivation which have been proposed only three possesses any claim for consideration viz. those which connect it with Sophia (wisdom) or with Safa (purity) or with 'Suf' (wool). According to Bashr-al-Hafi (d. 841-43) the very name of Sufi is derived from Arabic root 'Safa' purity. The Sufi is one who keeps his hearts pure with God. This view is also remarked by Zunaid Baghdadi who was one of the most celebrated Sufi Sheikhs.

The very name of Sufism is derived from the root 'Suf' means wool. As the Sufi wear woolen robe to distinguish themselves from others. They came to be known as Sufi. Shahabuddin Suhrawardi is a great Arif who writes in his famous book entitled ' Awariful- Marif', derivation of the term ' Tasawwaf' is more suitable and appropriate to any other derivation, in fact from the earliest time, 'Suf' meant Coarse woolen garments, have been regarded as a symbol of simplicity, virtuousness, self renunciation, avoidance of luxurious and Comfortable life.¹

1.Suharwardi, S.K. Shahab-Uddin; Awariful Marif, Cairo, 1957 and Lucknow 1926.

A great oriental writer , Noldak has conclusively established that the word ' Sufi' was derived from an Arabic word 'Suf' meaning coarse wool and was originally applied to those woolen garment as a sign of the Self renunciation and penitence and also Sufis wear woolen robs to distinguish themselves from common people. Ibn Khaldus says that Coarse Woolen garments were put on so that those who wear them might be distinguished from those who indulged in luxury.¹

Some of the scholars are of the opinion that 'Tsaswwuf' is neither Arabic word nor Islamic term. Rather than it is derived from the Greek word ' Sofia' when the translation of the Greek word started taking place this mystical term came in to Arabic. Strictly speaking the Arabic word 'Sufi' like the Sanskrit word 'Yogi', refers only to one who has attained the goal, nevertheless , it is often applied by extension initiate who are still merely travelling towards it. The word 'initiate' From the above mention discussion, it is clear that a number of derivation, have been proposed for the term ' Tsaswwuf' but it is not certain serves to indicate that, in order to embark on the spiritual path, a special rite of initiation is an indispensable prerequisite.²

From the above mentioned discussion it is clear that a number of derivations have been proposed for the term 'Tsaswwuf' but it is not certain that from which it is derived. In conclusion the Islamic scholars and Mystics claimed that 'Tsaswwuf' is derived from Arabic term 'Suf'.

1. Tamizi, Mohd Yahya, Sufi Movement in Eastern India, New Delhi, 1992, p-2
2. Stoddard, William and Nicholson R.A. The Mystical Doctrine of the Ideas of personality, Delhi-1998, p. 45

Some scholars traced the origin of Sufism from the eighth and ninth centuries A.D, when a new emphasis began to develop within the religion of Islam. This emphasis was a reaction against the prevailing impersonal and formal nature of Islam. For many Muslims the Shariah while seen as necessary, failed to satisfy their deepest spiritual longings and desire. The search for deeper meaning began with a pietistic ascetism, which in turn led to the development of the popular mystical side of Islam known as Tsaswwuf or Sufism.

Islamic Mysticism has several stages of growth including....

1. The appearance of early asceticism.
2. The development of a classical mysticism of divine love and
3. The rise and proliferation of fraternal order of mystics. Despite these general stages, however, the history of Islamic mysticism is largely a history of individual mystic experience.

The first stage of Sufism appeared in pious circle as a reaction against the worldliness of the early Umayyad period (A.D. 661-749). From the practice of constantly meditating on the Quranic words about Doomsday, the ascetic became known as "those who always weep" and those who considered this world " a hut of sorrows'. They were distinguished by their scrupulous fulfillment of the injunctions of the Quran and traditions by many acts of piety, and especially by a prediction for night prayers. ¹

1. <http://www.suite1011.com/article/cfm/sufism/67134>

Prof. Edward G. Browne gives four theories in regard to the origin of Sufism, viz: 1. esoteric doctrine of the Prophet. 2. Reaction of the Aryan mind against a Semitic religion, 3. Neo-Platonic influence. 4. Independent origin.

Neither of the four theories altogether satisfied the learned professor and very certain it is that the last the mentioned theory is of very little account. Prof. Browne seems in favour of a "spontaneous growth" existing in various forms, under various names throughout the civilized world; but after all this is not very tangible evidence. Moreover, we must bear in mind that the Neo-Platonist philosophers paid a visit to the Persian court in the sixth century A.D., and founded a school there in the reign of Nowshirwan. It is highly Probable, therefore, that those seven philosophers forced to Justinian who forbade the teaching of philosophy of Athens, should have had considerable influence upon a few of the more thoughtful Persians, we shall now find that this theory is borne out by internal evidence.

Let us briefly study the tenets of Neo- Platonism. The Neo-Platonists believed in the existent, it is generated from itself. Creation was the reflection of its own Being. Nature, therefore, was permeated with God. Matter was essentially non-existent, a temporary and ever making shadow for the embodiment of the Divine. The neo-Platonist believed that by ecstasy and contemplation of the All-good, man would rise to that source from whence he came. These points bear directly upon the Sufi teaching. They form a broad outline of the tenets of Sufism, from temperamental and other causes, elaborated these ideas, gave them a rich and beautiful setting, and, what is all important, built about them one of the most interesting phases of mystical

poetry the world has ever known, and this particular phase may be said to date from the twelfth century A.D.

According to the author F. Hadland Davis it will be readily admitted that the Sufis certainly owed something to the Neo-Platonists. The cry for the Beloved was in their hearts before the Greek philosophers came; but Neo-Platonism appealed to their Oriental minds. It was stepping-stone across the river of their particular spiritual tendencies, and they trod thereon, and proceeded to lay down their stone across the stream. The Neo-Platonist's conception of God was purely abstract, the Sufi's essentially personal, as far as the early Sufi's essentially personal, as far as the early Sufis were concerned, we shall consider other influences which were brought to bear upon Sufism a little later on. There very great difference between the early Sufism and the elaborate additions that flowed as an evolutionary matter of course.

In brief, then, Neo-Platonism was the doctrine of Ecstasy. A question from the letter of Plotinus to Floccus on Ecstasy will still further show the similarities between this Greek and Persian teaching:

"The wise man recognizes the idea of the Good within him. This he develops by withdrawal into the Holy place of his own soul contains the Beautiful within itself, seeks to realize beauty without, by laborious production. His aim should rather be to concentrate and simplify, and so to expand his being, instead of going into the Manifold, to forsake it for the one, and so to fly upwards towards the Divine Front of Being whose stream flows within this Sufism in prose. The Sufis turned the same conception into poetry.¹

1. Rumi the Persian Mystics, by F. Hadland Davis, p.5

The Early Sufis:

Abu Hashim (150 A.H.) was the first to bear the name of Sufi, while Dhu'nninal-Misri (245 A.H.) may be said to have given Sufism its permanent shape. Rabia of Basra was the first woman to join the sect, and her saintliness and wise sayings have been preserved by Fariduddin Attar. One day a great sickness fell upon Rabia, and on being asked the reason for it she replied: "I dwelt upon the joys of paradise and therefore my Beloved has chastened me". Rabiaa did not believe in earthly marriage. Her remark on the subject is given as follows: "the bonds of wedlock have descended upon me. I am not my own, but my Lord's, and must not be unfaithful to Him". Attar also informs us that when Rabia was asked if she hated the devil, she replied: "My love to God leaves me no time to hate him." Rabia was a woman of much independence thought, ethical rather than metaphysical in the remarks, and strongly opposed to outward ceremonials. She is said to have died at Jerusalem, 753 A.D. It was at Ramla in Palestine, that a Christian noble man built a convent (Khanqah) for the Sufis. Thus in the early days the sect defined their prophets condemnation of mockery by building an abode for members of the order. The Sufis were strongly opposed to the idea of free-will or distinct and self-existent personality apart from the beloved. The orthodox Muslim's idea was precisely the reverse. The Sufis have always made the Quran their text book. With infinite license they ingeniously add their own explanations when necessary. No doubt there were political reasons for adopting these methods of concealing heterodox ideas under the cloak of orthodoxy. We shall see, however, as the sect grow and still further

broadened its views, that these clever compromises did not prevent the appearance of martyrs among their member in the future.

By the end of the second century of the Hejra the Sufis were a much-respected religious order. In the following century Quietism had not only changed to pantheism, but pantheism had kindled a belief that Beloved and love were identical. The step was inevitable and at this juncture it was that Sufism became essentially mystical, and it became more mystical as years advanced. About this time, viz., the beginning of the third century A.H., we come across two interesting Sufis who seem to have been the prime movers in this new development, by name Bayazid and Mansur al- Hallaj.

Concerning the saint Bayazid an interesting story is told in the fourth book of the Masnawi. The saints surprised his disciples one day by saying: "Lo, I and God Almighty. There is no God beside me; worship me!" The disciples, thinking their Master was beside himself, told him, when the strange ecstasy had passed, what he had said. Bayazid promptly replied; "If I do so again straightway slay me!" His disciples accordingly sharpened their knives. Once more Bayazid cried out: "Within my vesture is naught but God, whether you seek Him an earth or heaven." The disciples, horror-struck at his remarks, straightway plunged their knives into Bayazid's body. But their blades were turned back against their own throats, so that they died. He explained to the few disciples, who had not struck him, that, the ecstasy he had been experiencing annihilated self, "His form is vanished, he is mere mirror." The disciples who had struck him show their own faces in that mirror and

so wounded themselves, and not Bayazid, whose soul had left the mirror of his body", and was one with the Beloved.

Perhaps the life of Mansur al Hallaj is even more interesting. Whether he was a mere adventurer or genuine exponent of Sufism is still open to controversy among modern Sufis. It will be perfectly safe to describe him as either a saint or a vagabond. He was possibly both extreme to suit the necessities of a very exciting and eventful career. He was born in the close of the ninth century A.D., and was said to perform many miracles, such as raising the dead to life, and drawing gold and flowers from the air. According to his own believes he could write verses equal to those of the Quran. He went one better than the "Superman" theory, however, and called himself God, and his disciples after the various prophets Akbar was caked God, but deification in this case did not sound from his own trumpet; its sounded from the trumpet of an enthusiastic poet: " See Akbar and You see God." Al- hallaj visited India for the purpose of studying magic and there saw the interest. This mystic adventurer wrote 46 books, and certainly gained considerable influence over the lower classes by his many signs and wounders. He is said to have disputed the necessity of making a pilgrimage to Makkh by stating that by occult practices it could be performed equally well in any room. On a certain occasion, however we cannot help but admire Al Hallaj's wit and aptitude. One day he stretched forth and empty hand and produced from the air an apple, which he asserted he had plucked from the paradise. One of his witnesses disputed his assertion, because this particular apple was maggot eaten, and therefore not of divine origin. Al Hallaj at once replied:

it is because it hath come forth from the Mansion of Eternity to the Abode of Decay:
to its heart hath corruption found its way!"

Al Hallaj, on account of his various heretical teachings, was imprisoned and subjected to all manner of cruelties. Bravely he went forth to the place of crucifixion for four days he was nailed on a cross on both sides of the Tigris: From these tortures, he was finally released. Ten years later he was executed, telling his disciples he would return to them in thirty days, and textually reciting poetry, he cried: From His own cup He bade mes sup, for such is hospitality!" A comment of his on Sufism – a very ironical one –was: "that which is mine, for by God I never distinguished for a moment between pleasure and pain!" Yet another characteristic saying of his was: " the way to God is two steps; one step out of this world and one step out of the next world, and lo! You are there with the Lord! Whatever were the faults of Al Hallaj, and they were many, at least it may be said of him that he was a brave man. With all his fanaticism, his absurd indiscretion and love of conjuring, he left far behind of permanent value to the Sufis. The Government, in those days, did all in its power to restrain the publicity of his books: but a light that was never for a moment set under a bushel cannot be hid; the very attempt to obliterate it is in itself cause for a keener and more persistent search.

In the fifth century of the Hejra we may note Abu-l- Khair as the first to give Sufism political significance, and Imam Ghazzali as the first to give it a metaphysical basis. At this time we find in Sufi books many terms borrowed from the Neo-Platonists. Books on ethics, as well as poetry, now become impregnated with Sufi ideas. ¹

1. Rumi the Persian Mystics, by F. Hadland Davis, p.12

Sufism had become part of the Islamic doctrine even before the 2nd century of Hijra. The word 'Sufi' is generally said to have been used for the first time in the 2nd/8th century.¹

The man who played an important role and decisive role in the history of the Sufism was Abu-Yazid Taifur al Bistami (d. 260 A.H./ 874 A.D.) who is regarded as one of the founders of Pantheistic School. His grandfather, Sherwasheh was a Zoroastrian who lived in Bistan, a town near the South East of Caspian Sea. Bistm was the disciple of Abu Ali Sina. He was the first propound of the doctrine of 'Fana' (annihilation) and 'Baqa' (remains). His teaching of Sufism was identical with pantheism. He uttered: "Beneath this clock of mine, there is nothing but God, Glory to me how great is my majesty." Etc. He gave a definite turning point to Sufism by introducing into it the elements of ecstasy mystic doctrine of the immanence of God. This doctrine of the Islamic mysticism has implied that "All is God" as is something erroneously believed."²

He also rightly remarks that the knowledge of God cannot be obtained by seeking, but any those who see it find it.³

Rumi was the first Islamic mystic to use the word 'Fana' and Baqa (annihilation of the self through union with God, internal life is Baqa) this Taifurian school was further By Husain Ibn Mansoor Known as Mansoor Hallaj (d.921 A.D).

1. Al Sarraj, Abu Nasr, Kitab-al- Lama, ed Nicholson R.A. Leiden 1914, p.22

2. Tajkiratul Awlia, Attar Farid-ud-Din, Delhi, 1317. A.H. p.49

3. Stoddart, William And Nicholson, R.A., The Mystical Doctrines and The Idea of Personality. P.153

He suffered martyrdom for his monistic formula "Anal Haque". I am the truth i.e. I am God; whose epithet was Al- Haque. It was a very important contributory factor in the growth of mysticism in Persia and India. His idea flourished a basis for the development of the doctrine concerning the "Insan-e-Kamil" i.e. perfect man. The formula of Hallaj was further developed by Ibnul- Arabi and Abdul KArim Jili in later centuries and also adopting it by Abul Fazl in his conception of the ideal king. When its metaphysical, philanthropic and social facades. Sufism became a conduit between Islam and the people and deeply influenced the intellectual, social and cultural life. This idea was established in his Kitabul Tawasin (Transcendence of God and manifestations of Love) ¹

1. India and Iran in the Medieval Period, A Bird's Eye. Dr. Jagadish Narayan Sarkar, Vol-xxvi, Calcutta, p.22.

Rumi and his Sufi path of Love

Rumi's path of Love and " being freed' with the Sama

Human beings are equipped in the best possible way, both materially and spiritually. Potentially, a human being is able to achieve the level of "the best creation," which is dependent on his ability to use and develop his endowment of spiritual attributes. Those who can escape from the material world and escalate towards the higher ranks of the heart and soul will experience this world in a different way and they will become conscious of the secret of creation. When they look they will see thing that others cannot; and everywhere they look, they will see the manifestations of Beautiful names of God. Without doubt they never trade such moment filled with the indescribable flavors of spiritualism for anything. Instead, they will spend all the bounties given to them for the sake of God with the sole intention of reaching Him. Those who have achieved such nearness to God are always careful in their relations with the Beloved and thus extremely caution to retain sensitivity and maintain this level. These people are nothing more or less, in effect, than friends of the Truth.

Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi is one of these Friends-of the perfect representatives of the many Sufi devotees whose way of life is to love and be of service to people, to become a perfect human being, and thus to have a great pleasure of God. Rumi's path of love within Sufism's inclusiveness has always attracted people from all

cultures and backgrounds and this is certainly the major reason for Rumi's appeal in both the East and the West.¹

Rumi was not introduced to Sufism by Shams Tabriz. His own father was a Sufi master. However, before his contact with Shams, Rumi's understanding of Sufism was mere intellectual. It did not take him out of shackles of self and endow him with the vision of reality. It was only when he plunged into the ocean of love that he transcended the boundaries of formal consciousness. In his poems Rumi extols Shams in every possible way as "lord of the lord of the truth". And as the revelation, beyond the careful obedience of religious observances, of a further immensity of love, an opening into unity with the divine.²

The theoretical aspect of this path is Sufism, while the practical aspect is Dervishes. Rumi led the theoretical path, as a leader for his time and all times to come after him, in addition, his nature dervishes, taken from this world and decorated with angelic qualities, set a good example of devotee to God through the passion and love with which he inspired millions. During his lifetime there were many people of other faiths around Rumi, listening to him and respecting him for what he was teaching. Thus Rumi emerged in a period in which disorders, conflicts and exploitation lay heavy on the peoples of the world. Throughout this period Rumi proved himself to be both a powerful personality and an eminent scholar. For not only did he talk about compassion and tolerance, but he actually produced an Exemplary atmosphere where these values were upheld, thereby opening the door to dialogue through his message.

1. <http://www.kitapkaynagi.com/urum.php>

2. Understanding Sufism, by. Afaf Shahryar. P. 107

Today, we are experiencing rather similar turmoil, unrest and conflicts everywhere. Yet instead of raising the awareness of the need for understanding, religious devotions are simply being manipulated in the so-called "Clash of Civilizations". Once again, therefore, we need this most outstanding poet, a revered mystical renowned for his understanding and wide embrace, to shed light on the relation of human beings to their Creator as well as their interactions with others.

The East and West's Fascination with Rumi : The world has never been without representative of love and peace. Rumi was and is one of the perfect representatives of such a complete human being, and one of the greatest teachers of universal love and peace.

Rumi has always been a major figure in the Middle East and Western Asia, where he has had an exalted and comprehensive impact among a wide variety of people. The great Islamic scholar and poet, Muhammad Iqbal, became fascinated with Rumi's view of discovering the Divine Entrustment in one's self. Embracing Rumi's understanding of the perfect human being, and seeing Rumi as a spiritual guide for himself, Iqbal states, "I received a share of his light and warmth. My night has become day due to his star. In Rumi, there is sorrow, a burning that is not strange to us. His union talks of going beyond the separations. One feels the beauty of love in his reed and receives a share, a blessing from the Greatness of God.

Yet Rumi is not merely a Mawlana ("our Master") - one of the titles assigned to him and widely used by Muslims- whose scope is limited to one part of the world. Rather, he is the Master of people from both the East and the West. In fact, Westerners have increasingly been amazed that his presence seems so alive eight

centuries after his death. In a tribute to Rumi, Andrew Harvey puts forward that Rumi the remote star shinning in the West, will help lead the West out of its materialist manifestation of ego- over everything. Thus, Harvey sees Rumi as guide to the new mystical renaissance that is struggling to be born today and the spiritual inspiration for the 21st Century. People from various religions, cultures and backgrounds honoured him at his funeral. Local Muslims, Christians, Jews, Turks, Arabs, Persians and Romans all followed the bier of this lover of God.

The Mevlevi dervishes have kept the date he died as a festival, which is called Shab-i- Arus, because Rumi, a true devotee of God, saw life as a corridor for meeting with God, and defined death as the meeting time, which he described in this poem:

On the day of death, when my coffin is on the mock,
Do not suppose I have any pain at leaving this world.

When you see my hearse, say not

"Leaving! He's leaving!"

That time will be for me union and encounter,

When you commit me to the grave,

For the grave is a veil over the reunion of paradise. 1

Being a Sufi, Rumi described his false and all illusion on the way to perfection, ultimately aiming to reach God, and he always had a well-grounded and profound interpretation of the teachings of the Prophet of Islam, peace be upon him, and the Quran in his works:

I am the servant of the Quran as long as I have life.

I am the dust on the path of Muhammad, the chosen one

If anyone interprets my words in any other way,

I deplore that person and I deplore his words.¹

Rumi's love and owe for God, combined with his poetic character, Hos'som in Masnawi. Rumi was in his fifties when he started Masnawi, a work which he completed in eight years. Apart from his Masnawi, the written in rhyming couplets, Rumi has four other major works: Diwan-i- Kabir is lyrical, and other three are prose. With more than forty thousand couplets, Diwan-i- Kabir is full of an enthusiasm and awe that reflects the inner spiritual work of Rumi. The works in prose are : Fihi ma Fihi, which contains Rumi's teachings to his students and the public on various topics: Majalis-i- Sa'ba, which contains his sermons and Maktubat, which contains his letters various people.

For centuries, Rumi, the remote star, has been speaking to people from diverse faith communities, cultures and backgrounds through the language of love. He has

1. /essays/RUMI.FINAL.edu.marris.umn.edu/binac.pdf

opened up his blessed heart to all those who find something of themselves in his words. And it is now 800 years later, people from all over the world are reading Rumi more than ever. 1

Sama (Hearing ten Stars)

This is one of the most controversial practices in Sufism. The orthodoxy rejects it as antinomian to Islam, while the majority of the Sufi orders admits its utility. It helps in the concentration of mind and causes wajd (ecstasy). The ordinary people hear Sama for natural instinct, no vice for Shauq and khauf, the anliyas for the bounties of God, the Arif (Gnostics) for the knowledge of God and the perfect for the revelation: the hearers of Sama shed tears, some infer of God and others in joy. The perfect who have already reached the destination cannot be thrilled by Sama." 2

There have been given various definitions of Fana and Baqa by different Sufis. Suhrawardi sums up in the words that Fana is dominance of God's presence in the seeker's heart that the later is totally annihilated in God. Annihilation of self in God is Fana and subsistence with God is Baqa.

Fana is of two kinds; Zahiri (outer) Fana and Batini (inner). Zahiri Fana is a state in which the illumination of God is revealed to the seeker, in his actions. In this state the seeker experiences that God hears through his ears, seeks through his eyes and works with his hands. The individual doers his of the seeker ceases. The state of Batini Fana is that in which the attributes and the essence of God so overwhelm the

1. <http://essays/RUMI.FINAL.edu.marris.umn.edu/binac.pdf>

2. Sufi thought, S.R. Sharda, p.46

seeker that he does not have even the consciousness of his separate existence. In Fana of action, the seeker turns to God for His orders. But in the next stage God restores the seeker his doer ship and makes the seeker independent in his actions. Such a person is called Baqi. At this stage the lover is one with God and there is no veil between the two. 1

Spiritual Director

The position of spiritual director called Pir or Murshid or Sheikh is very important in the system. A Sufi director claims that he has direct contact with God and receives revelations direct from Him. Suhrawardi says that as Gabriel conveyed revelations in their form to the Prophet did not say anything from his own self or with a selfish motive but conveyed to the straying humanity whatever was revealed to him from God, so does a Murshid conveys the truth to disciples. Ibn Arabi took one step further and claimed that Auliyas (saints) are greater than even the prophets. The Murshids hold the position of an object of worship by his disciples.2

The object of man's creation, according to Sufism, is the acquisition of knowledge of God. The knowledge of the soul and the things of the world is an essential step towards the knowledge of God. Now we have to discuss as to how the knowledge gained through tradition, revelation, observation, logical reasoning and contemplation. The Sufis believe that the true knowledge of God can be gained only in intuition.

1. Sufi Thought, By S.R Sharda. P.44

2. ibid, 45

The Sufis believe that the heart of man is a mirror in which he can see the vision of God. But the heart mirror is polluted with the dust of worldly desires. To see the vision of reality it is essential that it should be cleaned of completely. The worldly desires are identified with nafs. It is not easy to kill the nafs even for a moment. The theories of the system have evolved a method of practice to kill it and to lead the novice to the realization of knowledge of God. The practice is twofold: to practice detachment from the worldliness and secondly to develop love of God through Muraqaba (meditation) and Musasaba (self examination.) etc. The practice is metaphorically called safr (journey) to God and the stages of spiritual attainment on it are described as muqanat (stations). The Salik (practicing) realizes spiritual moods called hal (states) at some of the stations and at the end. 1.

Rumi and the Sama

The 'Sama" (whirling Dance) symbolizes many exquisite aspects of life: the creation of the universe; the creation of Human Beings after the realization of servant hood, as supported with the love of God; and our escalation toward the ranks of perfect human (insane-i- Kamil).

As for the emergence of the Sama, it is reported that one day Rumi was passing in front of his friend Salahaddin Zarrinqubi's jewellery shop, in Konya. In the shop, Zarrinqubi's was shaping gold by hammering it in rhythm. Enraptured by the rhythmic sounds of the hammer used by Zarkubi, Rumi said;

The soul that have clung to water and clay,

Are pleased on being feed from them,

And begin to dance in the air and breezes of love

Becoming perfect like the full moon,

Seeing the manifestations of the Beloved's Beautiful names everywhere, what this great mystic heard in the hammering of Gold was the very word Allah, Al-lah, AL-lah in the rhythmic sound, and it inspired him into a state of ecstasy which resulted in his Sama, or whirling.

Rumi, whose spirit was already full of love and awe of God, was able to discern the "universal movement" of creation as he raised his hands toward the sky and started to turn round on his own axis, while also moving in orbit in a state of awe throughout his Sama. For Rumi, the rapture and attraction of all existence, from the smallest atoms to the largest celestial objects, is due to a hidden attraction to the

wine of the All-loving. The following poem of Rumi's expresses how he understood the Sama:

It is hearing the sound of "yes".

Of separating one from himself and reaching the Lord.

Seeing of knowing the state of the Friend,

And hearing through the divine veils, the secrets

What is Sama, do you know?

Struggling with the carnal soul: fluttering on the ground.

Like a half- slain hen.

What is Sama, do you know?

Feeling the cure of Prophet Jacob, and sensing the arrival of the prophet Joseph from the scent of a shirt.

What is Sama, do you Know?

Like the staff of Prophet Moses, it is swallowing

All the tricks of the pharoli's magicians. What is sama, do you know? Opening the heart like Shams-i- Tabriz from excellent devotee

And seeing the divine light. ¹

1. /essays/RUMI.FINAL edu.marris.umn.edu/binac.pdf

THE SAMA AND CONTEMPLATION:

The Sama is contemplation in action; contemplation was initially carried out silently in the inner self. Under the enlightenment of Hadith (sayings of the prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him) which warn not to contemplate on the essence cannot be comprehended, meditation came to be focused on the manifestations and actions of God, as an aid to meditation and to minimize rhythmic sounds were used to induce a meditative state intent on the love of God. At first, only natural sounds of different music instruments with spiritual essences were introduced in to the Sama.

In the early days, usually the *نیز* (the reed flute), rebab (the three- stringed violin), daf (the tambourine with cymbals) and zurnal a wood wind instrument) were used, but overtime only the *نیز* and rebab survived.

Music is defined by Rumi in the following couplet:

Music is nutrition of the souls of the servants of Lord, since, in music, there is the hope of reaching God.

Therefore, music, when combined with meditation and contemplation, is seen as being a faster way to reaching God. On the other hand, music brings out physical movement, as it addresses bodily impulses and desires. At first these motions were restricted to the swinging of the body while seated. However, with time, people started to accompany the musical hormone with swaying and larger movements, and this gradually evolved into the Sama. In this way, contemplation became the union of the soul, sound and motion, as both the heart and body achieved a state of meditation, overcoming all physical and intellectual interference.

Thus the sama sympathizes the escalation of the human spirit: the servant's turning of his face toward the truth; being exalted with Divine love; abandoning personal identity and the self to become lost in God; and finally returning to servant hood; mature and purified.

The Samazan, the whirling dervish, wears the traditional "hat"on his head, and with the tammura (a sound-like gown) on his body, is born into the truth as he symbolically removes his jacket at the onset of the dance, and beings his evolution-on the path of profound contemplation. During sama, his arms are wide open, with his right hand turned towards the sky as if paying, ready to receive honour from the Divine One, and his left hand turned down, transferring the bounties that came from the Lord to those who are willing to receive them. As the Samazan whirl from right to left, circling with the full devotion of his heart, he embraces all the nations of the world, and all of creation, with the utmost love and respect.

Ultimately, humanity was created to love and to be loved. According to Rumi, all types of love are bridges to Divine love, and believing his completely, Rumi spent his whole life dedicated to God Almighty. Not only did he try to reach Lord himself, but he earnestly strove to help others to do the same. In the end, he was a traveler on the journey of love, describing this love as one that "did not leave anything of me, nor on me." And through these travels of the soul, he allowed his feelings and emotions be heard by countless others, leaving a powerful trail of inspiration that would long outlast his own life, and came to nurture millions of souls. 1

1. [www.iran chamber.com/literature/rumi/mo/ana_rumi.php](http://www.iran-chamber.com/literature/rumi/mo/ana_rumi.php)

The Nature of Sufism

In the Islamic faith there are eight Paradises arranged one within the other in ascending stages. The highest is called "The Garden of Eden." All are lovely gardens full of luxuriant flowers and trees, amidst which gleam the domes and minarets of gorgeous places, rich with precious stones, where the departed are feasted and entertained by beautiful houris. All the Paradises are watered by rivers such as the kevser, the Tasnim and the Salesbil. The reat Tuba tree grows in the highest Paradise; its brances fall in to the seven other gardens. The brief description will be sufficient to show the nature of the Muslim heaven. That it was a glorified creation of the earth in eight degrees is evident. It was sensuous rather than metaphysical.

The five worlds of the Sufis are:

1. The "Plane of the Absolute lavishables."
2. The "Reality Invisible."
3. The "World of Similarities."
4. The "Visible World" (or the plane of " form generation and Corruption".
5. The "World of Man."

These five planes are often regarded as three: the "Invisible," the "Intermediate" the "Visible", or yet again as simply the visible" and "Invisible". Above the "Plane of the Absolute Invisible" is an infinity which we might, perhaps, compare with Dante's "Space less Empyrean". The Sufis regarded the existence of the souls as pre-natal. Moreover the full perception of Earthly Beauty was the performance of that Supreme Beauty in the spiritual world. The body was the veil;

but by ecstasy (Hal) the soul could be behold the Divine Mysteries. As Avicenna, in his poem on the soul, has written:

Lo, it was hurled

Midst the sign-post and ruined abodes of this desolate world.

It weeps, when it thinks of its home and the peace it possessed,

With tears welling forth from its eyes without pausing or rest,

And with plaintive mourning it broadeth

Like one benefit Q' er such trace of its home

As the fourfold wind have left. 1

Creation was regarded as the output of the All-Beautiful. The visible world and all therein was a reflection of the Divine, an ever changing scene full of spirit of God. The Zulekha will illustrate the Sufi's conception of the Beloved and His significance and relationship to His world of lovers:

Man was, therefore, a part of God, because he was a fragment of the whole; or, better still, he was a fragment of the whole; or, better still, he was a divine emanation. The Sufi recognized this fact, and his supreme desire was to be reunited with the Beloved. His difficulty, however, was to bear in mind that his worship should ever be

1. Rumi The Persian Mystics, F.Hadland Davis, p.p.12-14

of God and not of God's many beautiful forms. Love came in to his heart, and he endeavored to recognize that earthly objects, however dear and beautiful they might be were but lanterns where God's light shone through. Here it must be readily laudations of physical beauty, and we often find, with all the toleration and ingenuity we can bring to bear, that some of Hafiz's lines are no more spiritual than Anacreon's, to whom he has been compared. We have a number of Sufi words with a strictly Sufi meaning; but it would not be wise to strain the analogy of earthly love too far and say that everything that Hafiz wrote was spiritual. The Sufi poets, for the most part wrote about the Love of God in the terms applied to their beautiful women, for the simple reason that no one can write the celestial language be understood at that the Sufis, still remembering their old love songs, their old earthly delights in women dear to them, should find it difficult not to apply such names, such ideas even in their love of the One Beloved? Take those expressions literally and many of them are sensuous, but consider them as brave, strong, strivings, fraught with much spiritual fervor, after God, and you at once annihilate prejudice and come very near understanding the meaning of Sufism.

It may be questioned that if the earthly object of love was a mere passing shadow of God, the men who loved that object was equally insignificant. And again, how can God be the All-One when, according to the Sufi thesis, He divided Himself into creation? The part is not equal to the whole. These questions are easily answered. The stars shine in the sky, and on the bosom of the sea without diminution, Let the sea pass away, and the stars are still there. So when the world shall pass away it will only be the feeling of innumerable shadows we call

Humanity, God will still be there, and we shall still be there because we came alone from Him. There was a voice that sounded in men and women, in mountains and in seas, in the beast of the jungle and the singing of the stars. It was the Voice of Love, the great reckoning in the Hereafter to which all things must go. That voice to the Sufi was God calling His lovers into one chamber, one mighty love-feast. Jami has expressed the finality of Love in the following lines:

Gaze, till gazing out of Gazing

Grew to Being Her I gaze on,

She and I no more, but in one.

Undivided Being Blended,

All that is not one must ever

Suffer with the Won't of Absence;

And whoever in Love's city

Enter, finds out Room for one,

And but in oneness Union: 1

The Rev. Professor W.R. Inge, in Christian Mysticism, has brought good deal of adverse criticism to bear upon Sufism. He remarks: "The Sufis are Muhammadan Mystics, use erotic language very freely, and appear, like true Ascetics, to have attempted to give a sacramental or symbolic character to the indulgence of their

1. Rumi The Persian Mystics, F.Hadland Davis, p.19

passions." The same writer accuses Emerson of "playing with pantheistic Mysticism of the Oriental type," and goes on to compare him with the Persian Sufis on account of his self- deification. This critic in his desire to defame the Sufis, states that they are among the most shocking and blasphemous of the mystics, because they believe that state is present with them even in their earthly life. This, however is no teaching of the Sufis, and rightly considered, we cannot even except the sayings of Bayazid already referred to, because here he undoubtedly denies all claim to human personality, admitting God only. Self deification is no teaching of the Sufis. As the Buddhist's beliefs in Nirvan was a state only to be reached by degrees, after much striving and severe discipline, so was the fusion of the Beloved and His Lover a belief and a beautiful hope far out on the spiritual horizon. Hadj Khan, in his interesting book With the Pilgrims to Makkah, briefly touches upon this sect and mentions seven stages " In the spiritual growth of the Sufi, and not an arrogant proclamation of Deity and man being coequal in the earthly existence. The gradually ascending scale of Sufi's heaven is another point in favour of his argument. "For the love that thou wouldn't find demands the sacrifice of self to the end that the heart may be filled with the passion to stand within the Holy of Holies, in which alone the mysteries of the True Beloved can be revealed unto thee." The average Sufi was a poet. All that was beautiful was god to him. He tried to be nearer every day, and thus his soul swept on from flower to flower, higher and higher, until he was absorbed into the Divine. 1

1.Rumi The Persian Mystics, F. Hadland Davis, p.21

We have now seen that Sufism is essentially a religion of Love without a cred or dogma. No merciless hells leap up in the Sufi's beliefs. He has no one way theory for the life beyond: "The Ways of God are as the member of the souls of men". There is splendid, magnificent broadmindedness in this Sufi remark. This unsectarian teaching should be applied to every religion. It would tend to sweeten and deepen the thoughts of men, who would forget the piety non essentials of creeds and dogmas, lost in the perception of the All- Beautiful. 1

1. An introduction to Sufism, origin, philosophy and Development, by Masood Ali Khan. P.87

The Influence of Sufism On Rumi

This love here forms the centre which expands on all sides and into all religions.-

HEGEL

Although Jalaluddin Rumi lived for fifty years in a Turkish city he scarcely ever used any Turkish words; but nevertheless his influence in Turkish poetry was very considerable. The Turkish poets of that day poured forth innumerable "Spiritual couplet of a mystical nature. Indeed nearly all the Uthoman poets were either Sufis or men who wrote after manner of the Persian Sufis. Jalal's son Sultan Walad, wrote in Turkish the following concerning his father:

Wot ye well Maulana is of saints the pole: whatsoever thing he sayeth, do in whole. All his words are mercies from the heavenly King, Such that blind folk's eyes were opened, did they sing.¹

The Sufi influence on Turkish poetry, many years after Jalal's death, gradually weakened as time went on, and their poetry became less mystical. The French were probably responsible for this change to a certain extent.

Then, again Sufism influenced the poetry of India; but in this case there was influence on both sides, and the Sufis probably borrowed some of the Buddhistic ideas, especially in regard to their later conception of Divine absorption. The following remark of Abu Bahual- Shibli certainly points to the belief that the Sufis

1. Rumi The Persian Mystics, F. Hadland Davis, p.22

Inculcated certain ideas from the Vedanta philosophy: "Tsaswwuf" is control of the faculties and observance of the breaths."

Sufi poetry has greatly influenced Western thought. Many of the German mystics wrote as the Sufi poets had written before them. Particularly might be mentioned Eckhart, Tauler and Suso,. To trace the scope of the influence of Sufi thought in England would be extremely interesting. The influence was at first among the few; but the optimistic lover of the East believed that oriental thought is daily becoming of more interesting to Western minds. The students know that Edward Fitz Gerald's rendering of Omar Khayyam was anything but a faithful translation; that Fitz Gerald shock up Omar's words like so many dice and set them to the music of wine, roses, and pessimism. The Omar Khayyam club read Fitz Gerald, but not Omar Khayyam, and in consequence they have fallen into the error of associating Omar with Bacchus. But, nevertheless, we must be grateful to Fitz Gerald. He has given us great poem and stirred, let us hope, many of his countless readers to a more faithful study of Persian poetry. Concerning our modern poets the poet has quoted elsewhere a few lines of Mr. Arthur Symons on a dancing dervish. Many Thomas Lake Harris's poems are of a Sufi nature. In Mr. Stephen Phillip's beautiful poem "Marpessa", the following lines are full of Sufi mysticism:

For they,

Seeking that perfect face beyond the world,

Approach in vision earthly semblances,
And touch, and at the shadow flee away, 1

It is interesting to note that at least one celebrated English man adopted the Sufi teaching, the poet F. Hadland Davis refers to Sir Richard Burton. The Sufis believed heart and soul in the beautiful lines of Cameons, the poet for whom Burton had so great an affection:

Do what they manhood bids thee do, from none but self except applause.
He noblest lives and noblest dies who makes and keeps his self mode laws.
All there life is living death, a world where none but phantoms dwell;
A breath, a wind, a sound, a voice, a tinkling of the camel-bell. 2

Analysis of the Religion of Love

Put away the tale of love that travelers tell;
Do thou serve God with all thy might.

Jalal-ud-Din Rumi

Sufism, then, is the religion of Love. Lafcadio Hearn tells us, in his inimitable way, that earthly love is brought about by, a host of the phantoms of you seeking in your momentary, ego the joy of Love over again. Schopenhauer, with much pride, something we talk about and have never seen." Precise but this is no antagonistic Statement, as Schopenhauer supposed. Rather than befitting the beauty of Love, it is

1. Rumi The Persian Mystics, F. Hadland Davis, p.26

2. ibid, 26

an unconscious defence of a very great truth. Love can only be compared with Love. There is nothing else to compare it with. No one has seen Love because no one has seen God. A little child plays at funerals and tenderly buries a dead butterfly, not because it understands the mysteries of Death, but because Love prompted the action, and so we love without knowing the why and the wherefore. Scientists have already proved that first Love is not controlled by either of the individuals living; that is it but the expressions of thousands of tendencies in past lives. That love can be ever personal, ever 'limited to the individual, is unthinkable. We must recognize some day that those countless tendencies, those strivings after men and women seeming to hold our souls' affinities, were but the momentary finding of God in His creatures. We do not love a woman merely because she pretty, possesses pleasing mannerism. We love her because, in an indescribable way, she sings a song we alone can fully understand, a voice that lifts up our soul and makes it strong. We follow that Invisible Figure from land to land, from heart to heart, from Death to Life, on and on. When Love loves for its own sake, when the self is dead, we shall meet Him. We shall find the Beloved to be the perfection, the realization of that strong desire that made us lose ourselves in others. The more we lose ourselves in God the more we find Him. Men Women love and die. But Love is Divine Essence working through and through innumerable lives for its own eternal glory. Personality is limited to the finite world- perhaps a phase of two beyond the graves. Even that is the sum total of countless so-called personalities in the past. We love instinctively if it was wholly physical than it dies with the death of the object. If it was infinitely more than that, if it was the Love of Goodness and purity and the Beautiful it lives

on forever. But these things live not eternally in humanity. They are parts of that all-pervading essence-the Love Divine. Love God's light in men and women, and not the lanterns through which it shines, for human bodies must turn to dust; fade away. But the love of the All-Good, All-Beautiful remains and when such is found in earthly love it is God finding Himself in you, and you in Him. That is the supreme teaching of Sufism, the religion of Love. 1

The two fold practice i.e. detachment from worldliness and attachment to God is started simultaneously. Some of the practices which are helpful for detachment are Taube, Zohd, Foqr, Sabr etc. the practices which help in both the directions are Mohasabe, Moraqabe, Negahdast and Zehad. At every step in the beginning the attacks by nafs are frequent which make the progress difficult at every stage. Through Mohasabe and Moraqabe the seekers repulses the attacks of nafs and develop attachment for the Truth. There is another condition that there should be every sincerity and truthfulness in thought and action, that Taube, Zohd or foqr should be practiced with no other purpose except for the pleasure of God. The other side of the practice is that when one consciously revolves to abandon the sinful life, is implicit in the system that the practicant direct himself towards love of God. This is called Anabat. By and by through practice, his love for worldliness is obliterated and love for God consequently develops till love for everything except God is entirely eradicated from the heart. Ultimately the seeker attains the state of communication with God in which he realizes the true knowledge of God.

1. Rumi the Persian Mystics, F.Hadland Davis, p.p.26-29

Some of the important steps and stages of practice are explained hereunder:

1. Taube (Conversion or repentance). It is the first essential step and the basis of the spiritual progress. It means conscious resolve of the adult Muslim to abandon the worldly life and to devote himself to the service of God. It implies the consciousness of the result of sinful acts already committed and determination to presume the right path in future. He is convinced of the unreality of this world and is awakened to the appreciation of the spiritual realities. The convert is spiritually a changed man.
2. Zohd (Abstinence). Repentance is turning away from a thing which is forbidden and Zohd is giving up of a thing which is allowed even. Zohd in the hope of reward or in fear of punishment does not concern a Sufi. Sufi's Zohd consists in giving up for love of God alone. The perfection of Zohd consists of becoming unconscious of even renunciation at all. Such a Zohed is safe from the evil self and all dangers.
- 3 Foqr (poverty) : After abstaining firstly from what is forbidden and then what is permitted the practicant finds himself in a position of poverty or non-possessiveness. Now he strives to attain perfection in foqr. It does not constitute poverty in Sufi practice, when the worldly pleasures are denied to the seeker by the law of nature. But poverty consists in turning away from the worldly pleasures by the practicant himself. He is neither pleased at the gains of material things, nor pained at their loss.
4. Sabr (patience). After abandoning the worldly pleasures the practicant reaches the back to the life of the worldly pleasures. Man cannot remain steadfast in taube, Zuhd or faqr without endurance of sufferings. At every step nafs tries to overwhelm the rul. The patience implies the persistence of the divine motives as

against the lower motives. When through the exercise of patience all the passions are subdued and the divine motives came out triumphant, the stage of riza (satisfaction) is achieved. Sabr implies endurance of bodily hardships and pains either actively i.e. in performing a difficult task involving devotion or passively in enduring corporal punishment or in steadfastly resisting one's own passions.

Bhaktism

Bhakti is a generic term meaning loving devotion or attachment. It signifies a feeling and a sentiment, i.e., an emotive state of mind. Its meaning can get particularized only when the entity towards which it is directed is specified. For example, Guru Bhakti is devotion for the preceptor, whatever that may mean or imply in given situation. Similarly, Desha Bhakti is love and attachment for the country whatever it may involve or require. Accordingly, the word Bhakti, when used in the religious context, can acquire particularly only when the name or the notion of the deity to whom it is directed is mentioned along with it. Only then, can it indicate a particular theology and religious mode. For example, Vishnu Bhakti (as well as its variations, i.e., Krishna Bhakti, Rama Bhakti) and Shiva Bhakti can be legitimately explained in terms of Vaishnava and Shiva theologies.¹

The Bhakti movement is a Hindu religious movement in which the main spiritual practice is loving devotion among the Vaishnava saints. Nammalvar alias Sadagopan

1. Bhakti and the Bhakti Movement, A New Perspective, by Krishna Sharma, p.

is considered the greatest of Alwars (saints) for his rendering of the Dravida Vedas called Thiruvaimozhi (literary sacred chants of the mouth). The Haridas presented two groups Vysasknta and Dasakuta. The former were to be proficient in the Vedas, Upanishads and other Darshanas, while the Daskuta merely conveyed the message of Madhvacharya through the Kannada language to the people.¹

Rama Bhakti

Ramananda was the leader of the Bhakti movement focusing on Rama as God. Very little is known about him, but he is believed to have lived in the first half of the fifteenth century. He taught that Lord Rama is the supreme Lord, and that salvation could be attain only through love for and devotion to Him, and through the repetition of his sacred name.

Ramananda's Ashram in Varanasi became a powerful center of religious influence, from which his ideas spread far and wide among all classes of Indians. One of the reasons of his great popularity was that he renounced Sanskrit and used the language of the people for the composition of his hymns. This paved the way for the modern tendency in northern India to write literary texts in local languages.²

1. www.dishq.org/teachings/bhaktiyoga.html/bhaktiyoga, Article by Sri Swami Shivananda

2. www.sanatansociety.org/yoga,meditation/bhaktiyoga.html

Krishna Bhakti

Chaitanya's religious message was simple and clear cut- it was that of Bhakti for Lord Krishna and Krishna alone. He had advocated Krishna Bhakti as a total form of religion which could be followed to the exclusion of everything else. However, no formal exposition of this religion was offered by him.

In the writings of the Vrindavana Goswami's, Krishna Bhakti is projected as a religious path, complete in itself and self sufficient. According to them, if one follows this path, there remains no need for performing the duties prescribed in the Sastras. Those, it is said can bear no fruit if not accompanied by Bhakti. Salvation can be attained only through Krishna-Bhakti, and not by following what is laid down in the Vedas and the Smritis. Thus, in the Gaudia Vaishnava thought, Krishna Bhakti is placed above all others religious junctions, and is set apart as a religion itself. Not only this it is also described as the ultimate object to be attained (*evabhideyam vastu*). It is stated further that Bhakti has a twofold nature. It is *Sadhana* as well as *Sadhyā*, i.e., it is of the nature of spiritual endeavor and pursuit; and is also the very object of that pursued and endeavor. 1

The path of Bhakti it is said, is easy to follow. Whereas other religious modes may prove subtle and difficult, one can please Lord Krishna even by making small Krishna as the only support. One must work and think in a manner agreeable to him with the faith that he will protect his devotees. One must dedicate all one's actions to Him and confessed to him all one's imperfections. The devotee must consider

1. *The Bhakti and the Bhakti Movement, A new Perspective*, Krishna Sharma, p. 259

himself as totally dependent on Krishna and wait for his grace to attain salvation. All sins are washed away by reciting and listening to his name and glory. Jiva Goswami, therefore, states in the "Bhakti sandarbha" that man can attain salvations just by Hari- Kirtana, i.e. by chanting and singing the name of Krishna. Identifying Hari-Kirtana with Bhakti, he describes it as the Dharma most suitable for the Kali-yoga. He goes on to explain that these Dharma is most efficacious for the householders of the common man who remain tide throughout their lives to worldly affairs. For them the only way to salvation or muksha is to hear Krishna's Lila- Katha or the story of Krishna's divine sports.¹

Chaitanya's Krishna is Krishna of Mathura who performed the Rasa-Lila with the Gopis of Vrindavana- Krishna, who was the beloved of Radha. Chaitanya is reported to have said Krishna is at his best when he plays the role of a man. His form is essentially as a cowherd boy with the "flute in his hands young and gay".².

Devotees of Krishna worship him in different mellites, known as Rasas. Two major systems of Krishna worship develop, each with its own philosophical system. These two systems are Aishwaryamaya Bhakti and Madhuryamaya Bhakti. Aishwaryamaya Bhakti is revealed in the abode of queens and kingdom of Krishna in Dwaraka. Madhuryamaya Bhakti is revealed in the abode of Braja. Thus Krishna is variously worshiped according to the development of devotees 'taste in

1. *The Bhakti and the Bhakti Movement, A new Perspective*, Krishna Sharma, p. 260.

2. *ibid.* 261-62

worshipping the supreme Personality of Godhead (Krishna) as father, friend, master or beloved.¹

Bhakti as an emotive part of the religious quest has an important place in every religious tradition in the general sense of devotions. It can acquire a specific character only in the context of different sampradayas and siddhantas. For example Bhakti in the Vaishnava Sampradaya would mean Vishnu- Bhakti, and in the Saiva Sampradaya, Shiva Bhakt. Similarly, for a staunch believer of the Advaita Vedanta, Bhakti can mean devotion to the Nirguna Brahman.²

Sri Madhavacharya (1238-1317) identified God with Vishnu. His view of reality is purely dualistic in that he understood a fundamental differentiation between the ultimate Godhead and the individual soul and the system is therefore called Dvaita (dualistic) vedanta. Madhava is considered one of the most influential theologians in Hindu history. His influence was profound, and he is one of the fathers of the Vaishnava Bhakti movement. Great leaders of the Vaishnava Bhakti movement in Karnataka like Purandara Dasa, Kanada Dasa, Raghavendra Swami and many other were influenced by Dvaita traditions.³

Vallabhacharya(1479-1531) called his school of thought Shudhadvaita, or pure monism. According to him, it is by God's grace alone that one can obtain release from

1. www.sanatansociety.org/yogameditation/bhaktiyoga.html

2. Bhakt and the Bhakti Movement, A new Perspective, by Krishna Sharma, p.p. 42-43

3. [http://en Wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhakti,yoga/bhaktiyoga](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhakti,yoga/bhaktiyoga)

bondage and attain Krishna's heaven. This heaven is far above the "heavens "of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, for Krishna is the eternal Brahman. ¹

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (1486-1535) defined his system of philosophy as Achintya Bheda-Abheda(inconceivable and simultaneous oneness and difference).It synthesizes elements of monism and dualism into a single system. Chaitanya's philosophy is taught by the contemporary International Society for Krishna Consciousness, or Hare Krishna Movement.

Srimanta Sankardeva (1449-1568) named his school of thought "ek sarama naam dharma" and propagated it in Assam, an example of "*dasa Bhakti*", in this tradition there was no place for Radha. The most important symbol of this tradition is the Namghar or prayer hall, which denotes Assam's landscape. This form of worship is very strong in Assam today, and much of traditions are maintained by the monasteries(Satras) ² Bhakti Yoga is pure spiritual devotion, of love for God which is love. The deity is the beloved and the devotee is the lover. In Bhakti Yoga, everything is but a manifestation of the divine and all else is meaningless, including the Ego. When the Bhakti blessed by divine grace he feels an undivided union and non-dual consciousness prevails. Bhakti yoga is regarded as the most direct method to merge in comic consciousness.

Bhakti Yoga is based on the doctrine "Love is God and God is Love". The Bhakta experiences separation and long to meet or even just glimpse his beloved.

1..<http://en Wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhakti,yoga/bhaktiyoga>

2. ibid

Nothinig else attracts him, nothing else holds his attention, all else is meaningless. Food, sex, sleep, attachments, and responsibilities-all are no longer important in Bhakti yoga. ¹

Bhakti yoga is the most direct method, the shortest way to experience the divine. All yoga and knowledge, jnana, rest on the foundation stone of true faith, true devotion, and true Bhakti yoga. There is nothing higher than love and Bhakti Yoga is the religion of love, to kindle the candle of love with the spark of knowledge and to do the yoga of love and Bhakti Yoga.

In whatever form the Bhakta finds the divine, all other forms are magically present .The form literary becomes the deity ,which in term becomes the devotee. Knower and known, subject and object, deity and devotee-all become one. This is the essence of Bhakti Yoga.

Bhakti Yoga is a term within Hinduism which devotes the spiritual practice of fostering loving devotion (Bhakti) to a personal form of God. The Bhagavat Gita and Bhagavata Purana are two important scriptures which explain and develop the attitude of Bhakti. Hindu movement in which Bhakti is the main practice are called Bhakti movements-the major schools are Shaivism, Vaisnavism and Shaktism. ²

1. http://www.bhakti.yoga.meditation.com/what_is_god.html

2. ibid

Impact of Bhakti Cult on Sufism

The Vaishnava Vedantic Bhakti came to the north from south through the followers of Ramanujacharya during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Here, some elements of Nathism permitted into it .The system that developed as a result of the blend of Vaishnava Vedantic Bhakti and Nathism is called Gurmat. Kabir is one of the strongest personalities of this school. The task of introducing the Upanishadic thought to the Sufis was accomplished by him, whose time was much congenial for the two communities to understand each other .Further Kabir was previously a sufi and later on was won by Ramanda. So it became possible that the sufi heard him and were as a result attracted to the Upanishadic thought. Thereafter, the Sufis especially of Qadiri order, which had by then entered India, took up the study of the Upanishads and other Hindu scriptures. In Pakistan, the shrine of Baba Farid, became one of the center where flourished that Islamic philosophy which had been coloured by Hindu thought and the cult rituals. Political influence of the Hindus during the reign of Akbar also raised the value of their scriptures and thoughts. Many a Hindu scriptures like the Upanishads, Ramayana, Mahabharata, Yoga Vashishtha were rendered into Persian by the Muslims scholars. Ras Khan, Rahim, Pathan, Vaishnava, Abul Fazal, Faizi and Dara Sekuh were virtually Hindus in their practical faith. Vedanta overwhelmingly influenced the Sufis. Anayat Shah and his disciple Bullhe Shah also studied Hindu thought.¹

The first impact of Bhakti cult on Sufism was that the sufis adopted Vedantic

1. Sufi Thought, by S.R. Sharda, p.73

pantheism. Though the doctrine of Wahdatul Wajud propounded by Ibn-Arabi is quite akin to the Vedanta, but the former gained popularity among the sufis of India only after the Indian Bhaktas had gained ascendency in the spiritual field with their Vedantic Monism. Farid Sani and Shah Husain had accepted influence of Bhakti cult in the 16th century A.D. while the influence of Wahdatul Wajud doctrine appeared in the Punjabi literature, as late as Hafiz Barkhurdar, Bulle Shah and Ali Haider. Secondly, the Sufis borrowed from the Hindu Bhaktas the idea that God is the Redeemer of the sinful. An orthodox sufi does not claim that he is sinful. He is to correct his conduct, as his God is the executor of Punishment on the sinful. But the Bhaktas God is the saviour of the sinful. A Bhakta says that his sinful and God is the Redeemer of the sinful. So he is fully qualified to get God's grace. In the Sufism that came into India with the early Chisties and Suhrawardis, the question of God's grace comes after the seeker has killed his Nafs. The killing of Nafs by the *Salik* at his own initiatives was the precondition for God's Grace. Even after killing the nafs it is not certain that God must shower His Grace. Farid Sani says that the Salik should get up early and earn the blessings of god or he will be deprived of his share. But the later sufis like Shah Husain and Bulle Shah say that only God's Grace can save them, as they are sinful and will be doomed if justice is done.¹

Thirdly the practice of wifely devotion attracted the Sufis. Hitherto for the, Sufis

1. Sufi Thought, by S.R. Sharda, p.74

had never conceived themselves as the female lovers of God. Instead they had sometimes portrayed God as their female beloved and themselves as male lovers. Khusru the disciple of Nizamuddin Awliya uttered the following verse at the death of the latter.

Gori soe chain se mukh par dare kes,

Chal Khusru ghar aapne rain bhai chuhun des

(the fair one sleeps on the bed with the tresses scattered on her face

O Khusru, come home now, for night has fallen all over the world)

Farid Sani used the word 'kant' which means husband, for God. Thereafter, almost all the pantheist sufis of Punjab practiced wifely devotion which is Vaishnava element. Nard recommends wifely devotion as the best practice of devotion though it is Tantric idea, but the Sufis got it through the Vaishnava Bhakti. Neither of the two ideas seems to be psychologically sound, for realization it is highly unimaginable that a humble man should think the most high as the female beloved whose position in a man's mind is of subordination and an object of sensual indulgence, similarly, the idea of Kanta Bhakti is also absurd, that a man should think himself as a wife the instinct of the feeling of which is alien to him.

Fourthly the predilection of the Sufis for the Hindu thoughts resulted in the development in them the characteristics of latitudinarianism. The Vedas and the Quran and the Mosques and the temple and the Muslims and the Hindus became

1. Sufi Thought, by S.R. Sharda, p.75

equal for them. The intercession by the prophet became useless Kabir said in the fifteenth century A.D. that Rama and Allah are the two names of the one and the same God. The Sufis who lived after him also spoke in the same language. Shah Husain and Bulle Shah remembered God with the Hindu names.

Religious Movements of the Hindus

The influence of the Nath Yogis continued to be on the increase. Though some of them were initiated in to the Bhakti System, yet the abundance of the Yogic references in Kabir's verse, prema Khyanas of the Sufi poets and Nanaks Siddha Goshti indicate their wide spread influence throughout northern India. Their influence was not confined only to the Hindus, but they enjoyed respect in Muslim circles also. Akbar and Jahangir both occasionally and specially on the occasions of Shiva Ratri met the Yogis listened to them to get knowledge of their philosophy and their practices.

The Bhakti movement had reached Punjab through Namdev in the last decade of the thirteenth century. Kabir's verse had also become popular in all the corners of northern and north-western India and influenced both Hindus and Muslims alike. Baba Sain Dass set up his center at Gujrawala and his successor in other towns and villages in Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir. Nanak preached the path of Bhakti in Kitatpur, District Gurudaspur. His successor shifted the center to the Amritsar District.

The school of Baba Sain Dass preached the devotion of God in both the forms-Saguna as well as Nirguna. Vallabahachrya and his disciples like Sur Das cast their widespread influence in all the sections of the people, higher as well as Low in the northern India. Tulsi Das an exponent of Sagun Bhakti school who rejected the Advait theory of nirgunaities especially for the house holders, also earn admiration from people of distant place in India. The Saguna Bhakti school attracted many Muslims like Raks Khan and Rahim. Chaitanya gained followers from the Muslim pathans who were called pathan vaishnabas. Jahangir was an ardent admirer of Jadrup a vaishnava leader and he met him many a time at Ujjain and Mathura.²

Impact of Sufism on Non-Sufi saint Poets

Realization of God in the heart through love was the key-note and speciality of Sufism. But this was already being practiced by the Vaishnava Vedantic Bhaktas, no doubt they allowed icons as an aid for practice in the beginning, but Nathism denounced iconolatry and a few other practices concerning formalism. The school that developed as a blend of the two cults, was apparently so akin to Sufism that the latter lost its force and specialty .However, Kabir frequently reminds of Yama (the angel of Death)and his danda (rod).This of course, is indicative of the impact of early Sufism. But this element is neither discernible in the verse of Namdev, his

1. Sufi Thought, by S.R. Sharda, p.55

2. ibid, p.73

predecessor, nor in the works of Nanak his junior contemporary. So the Islamic element of fear of death is confined to Kabir as his individual characteristic and it could not get place in the system .Rather, the element of fear was considered antagonistic to love and a hindrance in the realization of God.

However,from the time of Akbar the stray use of sufi words and terms as equivalents of those of Vedanta can be seen in the works of Saint poets like Guru Arjan Dev and Wali Ram,the Munshi or Adviser of Dara Sikoh.But their compositions do not betray any impact of the thought.¹

Islamic thought, ideas and imageries have left indelible mark on the mystical views and traditions of India. There are hardly any religion, language and culture where Iranian mystical attitude has not developed. The Sufis of Islam have played a significant role in moulding the Indian culture and society, creating close relations between the Hindus and the Muslims and awakening the sense of communal harmony and mutual understanding between them."From the thirteenth century "says Professor Gibb."Sufism increasingly attracted the creative social and intellectual energies within the community to become bearer of social and Cultural Revolutions."This process continued and the Indian Sufis, by using mystical thoughts loaded with Arabic and Persian Vocabularies, preached their doctrine and views to their followers. Those who came under the direct influence of Iranian or Islamic mysticism mention may be made of Kabir, Guru Nanak (1469-1539), Chaitanya (d.1533) Shankar Deva (b.1449),Prannath(1618-94)and many others. The influence was left on their thoughts, doctrines and poetry. Among them whose

1. Sufi Thought, by S.R. Sharda, p.p.78-79

sayings and poetry are replete with such ideas and thoughts who won world-wide reputation for his philosophy of love for God and humanism, was none other than Kabir "As the Sufi preaching had already spread all over Northern India in Kabir's time, and as Sufi mysticism had impregnated the religious sensibility of the elicit as well as the whole composite culture of the time. Kabir's own religious ideals and representative could not but be somewhat influenced by Sufi thought and imagery, as is suggested by many of his sayings."¹

Kabir stands out as a unique personality amongst the Sufis^s of the fifteenth century India. Very few Sufi of this century could compare with this talented and genius mystic of India either in personal attainments or in appreciation of Hindi poetry. His excellence in mystical ideas has procured him external name and fame because he natured his spiritual experience and exercise and served humanity by preaching high ideas, and teaching men to help the poor disturbed and down trodden people. But it is strange to note that detailed and authentic information regarding such a great saint –poet like Kabir Das is meager, unsatisfied and controversial Tradition says that Kabir was an adopted son of a poor Muslim weaver belonged to lower stare in the eyes of both Hindus and Muslims and hence not bound by strict rituals and religious deceptive. This state of his family made him a conventional poet and sufi. He adopted his family work, weakling. Even his birth is still surrounded by legends. But according to scholars he was born in Kashi in 1440A.D. And passed²

1. Unpublished Article of Mansoor Alam, p. 1

2. ibid, p.3

away at Maghar in 1518 A.D. This period is regarded as the beginning of the Bhakti Movement in India. Regarding Kabir's rank and position among the Sufis of India and his contribution to Hindi poetry replete with mystical ideas, the author of Makhzanul Asafia states.

"Kabir murid-o-Khalifa-i-Shaikh Taqi ast.Az Auliya Allah -o -Mashahire ahde khud ast o jamate -e -welayat va dar tariqe welayat mastur dashti.Dar muhedin waqte khud ast ke bar olue darajate Maarif eyan furmude ast wa anwae asha'are Hindi darad....as rawai maugul ast o agar benazar e insaf be bini jawahir daqaiq dalailie haqaiq baminzan sanjida ast ke misle un dar kalame degar yafta nami shauad"

Shaikh Kabir, the disciple and successor of Shaikh Taqi, is described as being one of the great men of his time, and a leader among atheists. He is described as the author of many Hindi writings, which shows that he was a great man of learning. He is said to have been the first to write about God and his attributes in Hindi; and to be the author of many poems in Hindi.

Abdullah Khweshji, the author of the early eighteenth century Maariju'l Wilayat also says:

His(Kabir's)Hindi poetry is sublime and is a proof of the greatness of the author. If his poetry is carefully examined, it is found full of ideas of unification (wisal)with little mention of separation .He was a pioneer in expressing spiritual truth and genesis through the medium of Hindi. He wrote a great variety of Hindi poetry and his Bishnupads and Sakhis (form of Hindi poetry) are very famous. Those who do proper justice to kabir's poetry are convened that no other poetry can math it in the

expression of Devine secret and spiritual truth.

Abdullah Khweshi concludes his tribute to Kabir by quoting about twenty of Kabir's verses replete with Sufis explanation and thoughts. Kabir's spirituality is a blend of love and devotion for the beloved Lord, the one God, and mystical soul travel experience of a visionary and auditory nature.

Before comparing his verses with Sufi poets of Persian and kabir's indebtedness to them, it will not be out of place here to quote some of his verses hearing mystical ideas and thoughts. The Sufis have always stressed on the unity of God, divine love humanism, tolerance, importance of guru (Murshid) purity of heart, Zikr of God, confession of sin, no compulsion in religion etc. When we critically examine the poetry of Kabir we find all these Sufis elements present in his verses. Some examples can prove the statement.

On Guru (Pir or Murshid)

Guru or Murshid or spiritual guide plays a vital role in the development and redemption and redemption of human race. In Sufism the term guru or pir or Murshid has been referred to a holy man who dispels darkness and shows the right path leading to God through divine feelings. Kabir gives to Guru much importance and advises to consider him as Guru. He says:

Guru Govind dou Khare kake lagun paye

Balihari guru apne govind dev bataye ¹

1. Article of Mansoor Alam, p. 9

(My teacher and my Master both stands before me, to whom shall I bow first?

(O seeker) hail the teacher who has made this union with the Master possible.

Purity of Heart

According to Sufi only through purification of heart and rectitude of behavior, man can attain knowledge by self. Heart is the temple of God, when it is purified; it is free from ego, pride, anger and lust. It is the first steep towards spiritualism.

Nahaye dhuye ki bhaya jo man mail na jaye

Men sada jal me rahe dhoye bas na jaye.

The following verses of Kabir speaks that like other Sufis he also believes that the origin of all the human being is the same Divine Light.

Awwal Allah noor aaya qudrat ke sab bande

Ek noor the sab jag upjia kaun bhale kaun mande.

(First God created His light and from it all man made yea from the God's light came the whole universe. So whom shall we call good, whom bad).¹

The presence of mystical ideas in Kabir's poetry is also confirmed by Sardar Jafri, and eminent poet and critic of Urdu in this way.

"Kabir ka kalam aik ranga-rang gulasta he jis me Vaishnu mat ka sarangar mujaddid inqalab ki lalkar ' tasawwuf ka wahid-ul-wajud ya nirgun rab aur zaban ko

1. Kabir Granthawali, p.85

makan ke hodood me utar lene wala magan parmeshwar garj sab kuch majud hai.
Akhir mein who naye majhab kabir buth ke majid bane".¹

Similarity and Dissimilarity (Sufism and Bhaktism)

The Sufi literature produced by Persian poets like Attar, Saadi, Iraqi, Rumi and Hafiz etc supplied a warm fund of Sufistic tradition philosophy and thoughts to Indian mystics and poets of different languages and provided those moral and ethical ideas which became the élan of mystic movements in this sub-continent. The moral and spiritual sensibility of the above poets inspired generation after generations of poets and Sufis of this country resulting the appearance of good number of mystical literature in different Indian languages. The impact of Persian mystical literature in encouraging and fostering the forces of integration, love, tolerance and mutual understanding between the two big communities of India through the local Sufis, like Amir Khusrau, Nizamuddin Awlia, kabir, Nanak and others was very powerful. Among them special mention may be made of Kabir who took his spiritual and poetic impetus chiefly from the high power Sufi literature of Persia. Living at the moment in which impassioned poetry and deep philosophy of the great Persian mystics like Rumi, Saadi, and Hafiz were exercising a powerful influence on the religious thoughts of India, he dreamt of a reconciling the intense and personal Muslim mystic with the traditional theology and mysticism of Brahmanism. If Kabir's poetry and teachings are carefully studied and analyzed, it will be found that he was inspired by many Sufi poets specially by Rumi and by his philosophy of love

1. Kabir Granthawali, p.114

and unity of God. The Sufis recognize no other feeling more than powerful than love. According to them love is greater than any religion. It is the essence of all creeds. The moral intense the love the deeper was the man's penetration into divine secret. Divine love is the main essence of the mystical poetry. Kabir's concept of divine love seems to be an original synthesis of the yoga and Sufi tradition.¹

Rumi's love is the essence of existence and source of the merriness of the universe.

It is observed that the two Sufi poets Rumi and kabir although belonging two such vastly different religio-cultural traditions as Islam, Bhaktism and Hinduism, and separated by nearly three centuries in time and a vast geographical areas are united at the altar of divine love. For both, divine love was the central; theme of their existence, Rumi says,

Ishq az ausafe khudae beniyaz

Ashiqi ba gaire ou bashad mijaz²

(Love is the attribute of God who has no need of anyone; to be in the Love with other than Him)

Kabir expresses this in the following lines:

Allah Alakh niranjan dev

1. Unpublished Article of Dr. Mansoor Alam, p.15

2. Masnawi Rumi, vol.6, p.971

Rumi says:

Chasm band, o lab be band, o gosh band

Gar na bini sire haq barman be khand

(You shut your eyes; close ears and shut your mouth and if still you don't see the illumination of truth then you can laugh at me)

Kabir says:

Dekh ri tujh mahin tera dhani, dam korok pave

Dam ko rok auru mod ko band kar chand suraj gharek awe.

Rumi composed:

I am God. Some men reckon it as a great penetration;

But I am God in fact a statement of great humanity

The same vein Kabir sings;

I am in all, all are in me

There is none else but I;

I reside in the whole universe

Birth and death are part of my play

Without form, without contour,

I myself called myself Kabir,
myself revealed myself

As myself¹

I

1. Kabir Granthawali, ed. S.S. Das, Varanashi, 1979, p.150

The whole philosophy of Rumi resolves around love of God .His love for Allah was fiery one, with a constant weeping and longing for Gods mysteries. Kabir was also passing through this state of mind. He says;

Hainan to jhar laaiya rahat bahe nashas

Papiha piyu jiu rate piya Milan ki aas

Rumi says;

have sacrificed head and soul

To gain the beloved

Kabir says:

Yeh to ghar hai prem ka ,khala ka ghar nahin

Sees utaare bhoyein dhare,tab bithe ghar maanhin

(This is the abode my beloved (house of love) and not of a house of pleasure if some one wants to enter the house he should sacrifice his head then come)

In another song quoted in Adigranth of Nanak,

Kabir says;

I have met god who dwelt in the heart

when a stream is lost in the Ganges

it become the Ganges itself¹

Kabir's similarity lost in God by involving him

I have become the true one and need not go elsewhere,

1. Kabir Granthawali, p.37

Rumi says;

Behold, for I to myself an unknown, now in God's name what must I do?

I have not the cross, nor the crescent; I am not A Gainer nor a Jew

Two centuries later Kabir drew the similar picture

Na mein dewal na mein Masjid na kaaba Kaila men

Na tu ko naukar ya karam me nahn jog bairag men

(I am neither in the temple, nor mosque, neither in kaaba nor kailash

I am neither a follower of law (dharma) not a without law ;

I am neither an ascetic, not a liberator, neither a speaker, nor listener)

Both Rumi and Kabir were equally intoxicated with love of Supreme Reality and attained the loftiest spiritual ideals through the path of love .About love Rumi says;

Love starts in one part of body, and the whole is transmitted to gold. Kabir says;

Base rassain mein kiya prem samaan na koye

Rati aik tan mein sinchare sab tan kanchan hoye

(I tasted every kind of metal but none proved like love; a particle when enters the body it turns its limbs into gold.)

Like Rumi, Kabir's message of humanity was also based on universal love and peace. His message received acclaim both from the Hindus and the Muslims. God is

for all and we are His servants. Removing long anxieties from the society Kabir made every man civilized and brought a revolution in the then society. He says:

Kabir Khada bazaar, mange sab ki khair

Na kahu se dosti, na kahu se bair

Ethics and morality are the main themes of Sufi literature because these teach us love, compassion, self-surrender, social regeneration and self sacrifice. Ethics is the most powerful vehicle for the propagation of humanism and universalism Persian ethical literature has also left a deep impact on kabir's poetry hence this verse:

Aisi baani boliye man ka apaa khoye

Auroon ko sital kare, aapho sital boye¹

(Speak such words that will soothe your mind, it will also please others, as you will yourself find)

Kutal bachaan sab se bura jakare tan chaar

Saadh bachan jal roop hai hai barse amrat dhaar²

(Bitter words are worse, they burns the body to ashes , words of Sadhu of lover and are water pouring honey)

Madhur bachan hai aushadhi kathal bachan hai teer

Saroon duwaar hoye sanchery saaye saleal sareer(Sweets words are medicine, bitter words are arrows which entering through ears, gives trouble to whole body)

1. Kabir Dohawali, p.108

2. ibid

He further says:

Sahaj tarazu aani kari sabr as dekhe tol

Sab ras mahein jibh ras jo koi jane bol.

Rumi believes in humanism. He considers himself neither Hindu, nor Muslim, neither Christian nor Jews. His religion is Humanism and only Humanism.

He speaks:

Ches tadbiri musalmaan ke man khud ra name danam

Na tarse wa yahoodiam na musalmaanm¹

Kabir's similar idea is expressed in the following verses

"Hindu kaho to main nahin musalmaan bhi naahin

Paanch tawa ka potla gebhi khely maahi

(I am neither Hindu nor Muslim,

I am an idol of five elements in the hands of God)

Rumi says that he is fully sunk into the cup of wine and has become so intoxicated that has lost everything against drinking and poverty.

Be jam e sirre e ishq sarmastam do aalam raft ast dast

Bejuz rindi wa qallashi na hich saamanam

Kabir expresses the same views in this way:

Rata mata naam ka piya prem ughaye

1. Diwan-e- Kabir, p. 201

Matwala didar ka mange mukti balaye

(I am intoxicated to see my beloved, I don't seek salvation)

The following verses of Kabir speak the mystical impact on it. Kabir says the origin of all the human being is the same in divine light. He expresses

Awwal Allah noor aye qudrat te sab bande

Ek noor te sab jag ujya kaun bhale kaun Munde

(First God created his light and from it were all men, yea from the Gods light came the whole universe so whom shall we call good, whom bad)

CHAPTER -IV

**A Comparative Study of Philosophy of Maulana
Jalaluddin Rumi and Kabir in the following Fields:**

4.1 Concept of God

4.2 Meaning of Religion

4.3 Perception of Asheq and Mashuq/ Atma and Paramatma

4.4 Significance of Humanism and Universal Brotherhood

Philosophy Of Rumi

Jalaluddin Muhammad Balkhi is one of the greatest philosopher poets that the world has ever seen and besides this, he is a mystic par excellence. 1

He valued his poetic gift as a means of spreading his theosophical ideas and his spiritual experiences, and he did not, like Hafiz, use Sufi phrases as a mere poetic ornament. The real basic of his poetry is loftily and inculcated ethical system, which recognizes in purity of heart, charity, self-renunciation and bridling of the passion, the necessary condition .2

The philosophy of Maulana Rumi , like the philosophy of all the sufis starts from the conception that not only True Being, but Beauty and Goodness being exclusively to God, though they are manifested in a thousand mirrors in the phenomenal world. God was and there was nothing beside Hindu and it is now even as it was then. God in short is pure Being, and what is "other than God" only exists in so far as Being is infused into it, or mirrored in it. He is also Pure God and Absolute Beauty; the Real beloved, the Eternal Darling and the like.

The philosophical foundation of Rumi's thought seems to be the Quranic expression, Iman-Bil- Ghaib(belief in the unseen)which occupies a very important

1. Maulavi Flute, by S.H. Qasemi, p.30

2. ibid, p.40

place in Islam .For us,the force behind this faith is 'Ishq'otherwise it cannot bring revolutionary changes in the personality of an individual or society.¹

"His doctrine of Unity is, God alone really exists; there is nothing but God, not merely that "there is not God but God," which is generally the Muhammadan profession of faith. The world of phenomenon and of the senses is a mere mirage a reflection of Being on Not-Being, manifesting the attributes of Being as the reflection manifests its original, but not really participating in its nature. ²

In reality the great message of Maulana Rumi, as of all mystic poets, is centered in love. He has always sung of love, and announces that it is love which is dominated in every being or thing which originated from God who created the world for the manifestation of His love. Our poet says:

'His Love is manifest and the Beloved is hidden; the Friend os outside and His splendor is in the world'.

عشق او پیدا و معشوقش نهان

یار بیرون فته ، او در جهان³

1. Rumi's Impact on Iqbal's Religious Thought, by Nazir Qaiser, P. 158

2. . Maulavi Flute, by S.H. Qasemi, p.p.43-44

3. . Maulavi Flute, by S.H. Qasemi, p.47

It has been observed that Rumi derived his inspiration from the Holy Quran, the traditions, and the anecdotes from the life of the prophet. It is also found in the Mathnavi many questions raised and possible answers to them by the earlier Islamic philosophers, such as epistemological problems of Al-Farabi (870-950 A.D.) and Ibn-e-Sina (Avicenna) (980-1037 A.D.). All this wealth of Maulana Rumi on philosophical, theological and mystical elements, unfortunately, has not been developed in a systematic way but is lying scattered. We can glean the basic elements and can come to the conclusion that the dynamic Sufism of Maulana Rumi has delivered a message of great importance which, among other theories, pertains to there epoch-making theories of philosophy.

Rumi traces the gradual evolution of the human soul and explains how from the inanimate state the soul ascended to its human form and he holds out the hope that this very human soul has the potentiality to become Divine. It can be said that Darwin's theory of is in regard to the evolution of the human body but Maulana Rumi's is with regard to the evolution of the soul which is Hindu Vedantic in outlook but also has a sanction from Islam. The eternality and the transmigration of the soul are quite evident from the verses of the Mesnavi. Rumi cared little for logical contradictions in the expression of his thoughts and sentiments. He has used many contradictory, opinions current before him, as his material and conceived a new structure where the outlines and basic features are entirely his own.

Philosophy of Kabir:

Kabir's poetry is a reflection of his philosophy about life. His writings were mainly based on the concept of reincarnation and Karma. Kabir's philosophy about life was very clear-cut. He believed in living life in a very simplistic manner. He had a strong faith in the concept of oneness of God. He advocated the notion of Koi bole ram Ram koi Khodai. The basic idea was to spread the message that whether you chant the name of Hindu God or Muslim God, the fact is that there is only one God who is the creator of this beautiful world.¹

Kabir was influenced by prevailing religious mood such as Brahmanic Hinduism, Hindu and Buddhist Tantrism, teachings of Nath Yogis and the personal devotionalism from south India mixed with imageless God of Islam. The influence of these various doctrines is clearly evident in Kabir's verses. Eminent historians like R.C. Chopra, B.N. Puri and M.N. Das, etc have held that kabir is the first Indian saint to have harmonized Hinduism and Islam by preaching a universal path which both Hindus and Muslims could tread together. But there are a few critics who contest such claims.²

The basic religious principles he espoused are simple. According to Kabir, all life is an interplay of two spiritual principles. One is the personal soul (Jivatma) and

1. <http://www.thecolorsofindia.com/kabir/index.html>

2. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/kabir>

the other is God (Paramatma). It is Kabir's view that salvation is the process of bringing into union these two divine principles. The social and practical manifestation of Kabir's philosophy has rung through the ages. Despite legend that claims Kabir met with Guru Nanak, their life spans do not overlap in time. The presence of much of his verse in Sikh scripture and the fact that Kabir was a predecessor of Nanak has led some western scholars to mistakenly describe him as a forerunner of Sikhism.

His greatest work is the Bijak (the "seeding"), an idea of the fundamental one. This collection of poems demonstrates Kabir's own universal view of spirituality. His vocabulary is replete with ideas regarding Brahman and Hindu ideas of Karma and reincarnation. His Hindi was a vernacular, straightforward kind, much like his philosophers. He often advocated leaving aside the Quran and Vedas and to simply follow Sahaja path, or the simple natural way to oneness in God. He believed in the Vedantic concept of atman, but unlike earlier orthodox Vedantins, he followed his philosophy to its logical end by spurning the Hindu social caste system and worship of murti, showing clear belief in both Bhakti and Sufi ideas. The major part of Kabir's work as Bhagat was collected by the fifth Sikh Guru, Guru Arjan Dev, and forms a part of the Sikh scripture Guru Granth Sahib.

While many ideas reign as to who his living influence were, the only Guru of whom he ever spoke was Satguru. Kabir never made a mention of any human guru in his life or verses, the only reference found in his verses is of God as Satguru.¹

Kabir was strictly against the practice of hypocrisy and did not like people maintaining double standards. He always preached people to be compassionate

towards other living beings and practice true love. He urged the need to have company of good people that adhere to values and beliefs in his writings that include dohas, poems, Ramainis, Kaharvaas and Shabads. He opposed the idea of worshipping the idols. On the contrary, he advocated the Vedantic concepts of Atman. He supported the idea of minimalist living that was advocated by the Sufis talking about the philosophies and principles of Kabir Das, he was against the cast system.²

Kabir strove for one Truth. He described himself as the son of both Ram and Allah. The basic religious principles he espoused were simple. According to him, all life is an interplay of two spiritual principles.³

One is personal soul (Jivatma) and other is God (Paramatma). It was Kabir's view that salvation is the process of bringing into union these two divine principles.

The teaching of Ramananda gave rise to two schools of thought, the orthodox and the liberal. The orthodox school is represented by Nabhadasa, the author of Bhakti mala, and Tulsidas, the author of the famous epic poem Rama Charita Manas. The liberal school is represented by Kabir, Nanak and others. Kabir, the most radical disciple of Ramananda gave a positive shape to the social philosophy of his illustrious teacher. In his tunctional arguments against the barrier of castes, Ramananda prepared the way for Kabir. The latter made a sincere attempt at

1. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/kabir>

2. <http://www.thecolorsofindia.com/kabir/philosophy.html>

3. <http://www.indiadivine.org/andarya/hinduism>

a religious and national synthesis out of conflicting creeds. Kabir was neither a theologian, nor a philosopher. He appears before us a teacher. He had the courage to condemn what he considered to be sham and counterfeit in both Hinduism and Islam.

The central theme of Kabir's teaching is Bhakti. According to Nabhaji, "Kabir refused to acknowledge caste distinction or to recognize the authority of the six schools of Hindu philosophy, or the Brahmanas.¹

Kabir was a great scientist and ridiculed all the institution of sati. He was equally against the veiling of women. Kabir refused to believe that birth in a particular caste was due to the deeds in a previous life. He advocated perfect equality of Sudras and Brahmanas. Both Sudras and Brahmanas were born in the same way. He wrote:

"While dwelling in the womb iman hath

No family or caste;

1. Society and culture In Medieval India, by Abdul Rashid, p.245

4.1 Concept of God (Rumi)

God occupies the pivotal place in religious life. Every thing revolves round the concept of God. He is personal and dynamic and not a mere abstraction or idea. He is not an attribute less Reality. In the Quran "for our understanding" He describes through revelation His attributes by similitude from what is loftiest in the heavens and the earth and in our own experience (our highest ideals)". Through supersensible, he can be known through religious experience. God plays a very important role in the development of man's self. Man develops his self by assimilating the attributes of God and by correctly understanding the nature of God and His relationship to man and the universe.¹

The consciousness of the relationship of God to man and the Universe is very important in religion, "The main purpose of the higher consciousness of his manifold relations with God and the Universe." ²

Sources and destination of Man:

God is the destination of man; just as He is the source of Ego. That life is a journey back to God is expressed By Rumi thus:

منزل ما كبر يا است

(Our destination is God.)

1. Rumi's Impact on Iqbal's religious Thought, Dr. Nazir Qaiser,p.204
2. ibid.
3. R.A. Nicholson, Selected Poems From Divan-i-Shams-i- Tabriz, p.32

Rumi further says:

هر کسی کو دور ماند از اصل خویش

باز جوید روزگار وصل خویش¹

"Everyone who is left far from his source wishes back the time when he was united with it."

Rumi gets inspiration from the Quran: "We are from God and unto Him do we return."And God is the beginning and God is the end."

God and human self:

To Rumi, God plays a very important role in the development of the human self. The man who absorbs the attributes of God and loves Him for the sake of love, develops his personality. Rumi says:

جان کل باجان جز و آسیب کرد

جان ازو دری ستد در جیب کرد

همچو مریم جان از ان آسیب جیب

حامله شد از مسیح د لفرب²

"The Universal soul came in to contact with the partial (individual) soul, and the (later) soul received from it a pearl and put it into its bosom. Thought that touches

1. Rumi Mathnavi, ii, 1183-1184

2. Rumi Mathnavi, I, 4.

on its bosom the (individual) soul became pregnant, like Mary, with a heart beguiling Massiah."

According to Rumi, God is not an abstract or attribute less Reality. For him, God is substantial Reality- Personal and Dynamic. Personal God cannot be mere abstraction or idea because only so far as "Personal Relations are allowed to exist between the worshiper and his God, can that God be properly described as personal. Similarly an attribute less God cannot be dynamic.

Rumi believes in Personal God, who responds to our calls and prayers. God has addressed the chosen ones several times in the works of Rumi. His address to Moses can be quoted as one of the examples. Again, Rumi asserts that God is 'Loving' and 'Living'.

نہ سما بینی نہ اختر نہ وجود

جز خدای واحد حی و دود ۱

You will see neither the sky nor the stars nor (any)existence but God, the one, the Living, the Loving.

Also, He is 'Hearing' and 'Seeing'. Rumi say

پیش شا هی که سمعیست و بصیر

گفت غماز ان نباشد جا گیر ۲

1.Rumi Mathnavi, ii, 1045

2. Rumi Mathnavi, v, 3148.

"(But) the words of tale bearer do not luke their abode in the presence of the king who is hearing and seeing.

Again to Rumi, God is the Supreme Self, and He requites when genuinely loved by man. Rumi says:

در دل تو مهر حق چون شد دو تو

هست حق راهی گمانی مهر تو

"When love for God has been doubled in thy heart, without any doubt God hath love for thee."

Evelyn Underhill refers to a very illuminating passage of Rumi in this connection; "No lover ever seeks union with his beloved, But his beloved is also seeking union with him. But the lover's love makes his body lean. While the beloved's love makes her fair and lusty.

When in this heart the lighting spark of love arises,
Be sure this love is reciprocated in that heart. When the love of God arises in thy heart, without doubt God also feels love for thee.

Next, Rumi believes God as dynamic. To him he is not static. God says in words of Rumi;

عادت خود را بگر دانم بوقت

این غبار از از پیش بنشانم بوقت

"I alter my custom at the time (I choose) at the time (I will) I lay the dust (that rises) in front."

Again, Rumi says;

کل یوم هم فی شان، بخوان

مر و را بی کار و بی فعلی مدان

"Recite (the text), 'everyday he is (engaged in same affair; do not deem Him idle and inactive."

It may be noted that according to Rumi there is no idea without being. Thought and being are one, though they look composite because of our physical senses. Rumi says.

علت تنگیست ترکیب و عدد

جانب ترکیب حس ها می کشد

زان سوی حس عالم توحید دان

گر یکی خواهی بدآن جانب بران

امرکن یک فعل بود و نون و کاف

در سخن افتاد و معنی بود صاف

"The cause of narrowness is composition (compoundness) and number (plurality); the senses are moving towards composition.

Know that the world of Unification lies beyond sense; if you want unity, march in that direction.

The (Divine) command Kun (Be) was a single act, and the (two) letters K and N occurred (only) in speech, which the (inward) meaning was pure (uncompounded).

Thus to Rumi, God is substancial Reality and not an abstract idea without being as we find in the case of some other thinker. For instance, the Aristotelian essence of God-head is immateriality, perfect in corporeality, pure spirituality-God wishes nothing God does nothing. He is absolute self consciousness.

The Reality is supersensible:

Rumi believes that God is not seen through our physical or perceiving through intellect and that He can only be known through inner experience, as discussed in the chapter on 'Discovery'. Rumi further expressed it thus;

آن یکی را تو ندانی از قیاس

ابنده‌گی کن ژاڑ کم خانا شناس

"That oneness you cannot known by reasoning. Do service (to God) and refrain from foolish gabble. O undiscerning man!"

The law of causation does not apply to God. God speaks in a verse of Rumi thus.

کار من بی علت و مستقیم

هست تقديرم که علت ای سقیم 2

My action is uncaused and upright (independent) I have (the power of) pre-

1. Rumi Mathnavi, ii, 718

2. Rumi Mathnavi, ii, 1626- 1627-

determination, (I have) no cause, o infirm one.

Rumi relates in this connection the story of the elephant which was brought to some country. The people rushed to see the elephant because they had never seen an elephant before. But as it was dark they could only feel him by touch. The person who touched the elephant's tusk consider him like a pipe. The one who passed his hands on the legs thought him to be a pillar. Still another who mounted the elephant's back took him for a commodious piece of furniture. So by touching different parts of the elephant, each person took it for a different thing. By relating this story Rumi concludes that Reality, as it was in the case of the elephant, is described by the individuals according to their own estimation and experience.¹ But the whole Reality is supersensible, and human senses grasp it in totality.

Rumi seems to find support in a Hadith for his above view. He says;

زین وصیت کرد ما را مصطفی

بحث کم جو بید در ذات خدا²

"Hence Mustafa (Muhammad) enjoined us, saying Do not seek to investigate the Essence of God".

1. Rumi Mathnavi, ii, 1626-1627

2. Rumi Mathnavi, iv, 3700

The attributes of God

God is individual

God is individual according to the Quran, which means that "He has begotten neither sons nor daughters, nor is he himself begotten. And how could he be said to have sons and daughters when he has no consort?"¹ Rumi believes God to be individual in the same sense. He says,

گر تو هم می کند او عشق ذات

ذات نبود و هم اسماء و صفات

وهم زاییده ز او صاف و حدست

حق نزایید سنت او "لم یولد" است ۱

"If he conceives that he is in love with the Essence (of God), conception of the 'divine' names and attributes is not the Essence.

Conception is begotten of qualities and definition. God is not begotten, He is 'Lamyulad'

1. Rumi's Impact Impact on Iqbal's Religious Thought, by Dr. Nazir Qaiser, p. 213

Relationship of God to Man and the Universe

God, according to Rumi, as we have seen, is not an abstract and attribute less being who is static and unmoved. Thus he cannot be segregated and separated from man and the universe . Rumi rightly says:

بی تعلق نیست مخلوقی بدو¹

"No created being is unconnected with Him"

Again, he says:

تو رواداری روا باشد که حق

هم چو معزول آید از حکم سبق

که ز دست من برون رفقتست کار

پیش من چندین میا چندین مزار²

"Do you deem it allowable, can it be allowable, that on account of the (eternally) prior decree God should come, like a person dismissed from office. Saying, "The affair has gone out of My hands, do not approach Me so often, do not entreat (Me) so much?"

And this relationship is of both transcendence and immanence, though he is neither the one nor the other alone. Further, according to Rumi, God is transcendent

1. Rumi Mathnavi, iv, 3695

2. Rumi Mathnavi, v, 3136-3137

because he is beyond the comprehension of thought. Rumi says:

هرچه اندیشی پزیرای فناست

آنکه در اندیشه ناید آن خداست

"All that you may think of is liable to pass away;

He that comes not into thought is God."

He is immanent because he is not separate from man and universe. That God is both immanent and transcendent is explained by Rumi through the beautiful example of iron and fire, as quoted in the section on "The test of individuality." The iron, when put in fire assumes the colour of the latter, but still is not fire, it is different from it.

This position of Rumi regarding immanence and transcendence of God reminds us of two verse of the Quran.(we take our) colour from Allah, all who is better than Allah at colouring. And "We are nearer to him than (his) jugular vein." This shows God to be transcendent and immanent respectively.

For Rumi, however, God is neither completely transcendent nor completely immanent. His absolute transcendence would mean that He is attribute less, static and a mere abstraction, which Rumi does not believe as we have already seen. Similarly the absolute immanence of God would mean a belief in traditional pantheism. This too is alien to the thought of Rumi. He believes in the separate individuality of man, as discussed in the chapter on the self.

Emphatically Rumi is not a pantheist. To consider Rumi as a pantheist is to misunderstand his thought. Many a prominent scholar from the Indo-Pakistan

subcontinent and the West has generally regarded Rumi as a pantheist, who holds belief in (All things are God and God is all things), But a deeper study of his works does not support this belief. If this aspect of Rumi is studied in the totality of his thought, he will not emerge as a pantheist. A person like Rumi who believes in the reality of the self, freedom of the will, the constant struggle of life, reality of the universe and transcendental aspect of God cannot be pantheist. Dr. R. A. Nicholson's findings in this connection are worthy to note. "Neither Ghazali nor Rumi is pantheist. From Ghazali we get the science and the doctrine, from Jalal-ud-Din the sentiment, faith and experience of personal religion. I am aware, that as regards Jalal-Ud-Din, this judgement may appear questionable to those who have read certain passages in the Divan-i- Shams Tabriz where he describes his oneness with God inters which look pantheistic at first sight and which I myself understood in a pantheistic sense at a time when I knew less about the history of Sufism than I do now." 1

Rumi's view is in clear contrast with that of Upanishads. The view of the Upanishad is true example of traditional pantheism. Their, "general teaching is one and immanent God (if we may use the word in the context) who pervades and controls the whole universe..... and is also the substance of the individual human soul? 2

1. Rumi's Impact On Iqbal's Religious Thought, Dr. Nazir Qaiser, p. 218

2. Rumi's Impact On Iqbal's Religious Thought, Dr. Nazir Qaiser, p. 218

Kabir's Concept of God:

Kabir uses the word Bhakti in its basic and intrinsic meaning i.e., he uses it in the sense of a bhava or feeling or implies by it only a state of mind. He very often uses the phrase bhava- Bhakti which indicates that he regards bhava alone as fundamental to Bhakti, and all other accompaniments as mere accessories. Bhava Bhakti, explains Kabir, can be known only by personal experience. He describes the inner spiritual experience as the both the means and the end of Bhakti, and also as its very essence. He repeatedly points out the impossibility of describing the exact nature of this experience. According to him, it cannot be explained through any verbal exposition; nor can it be understood through argumentation and hearsay. God must be worshipped through this bhava Bhakti. Devotional act and religious performances can have no meaning without it. Since Bhakti is only a matter of feeling and experience for Kabir, he takes into account the possibilities of its different modes of expressions and says; God can be felt and realized in various ways and the mode of worshipping Him can assume different forms. His recognition of the variations possible in the manifestation of Bhakti, however, does not minimize the definiteness of Kabir's own individual preference. Being an exponent of Nirguna-bhakti, Kabir regarded all other forms of Bhakti as mistaken and meaningless. Since Kabir's Bhakti is for the impersonal God and is rooted in mysticism, he condemns every external and ritualistic form of religious devotion observed in the name of Bhakti. He is full of ridicule for those who according to him, have no knowledge of the true nature of Bhakti but are called -bhaktas and pride themselves in it. Such people only distort the true nature of Bhakti. They make a mockery of God whose mystery they

fail to understand, says Kabir. These remarks are obviously directed against sects (including the Vaishnava) which attached greater importance to overt and ritualistic expressions of Bhakti for personal deities.

For Kabir, Bhakti is not an easy path of surrender, but is an arduous process requiring self-knowledge, courage and a constant effort towards self-realization. It is not just a simple attitude and an unthinking act of faith, but is a reasoned and individual act of spiritual striving. According to Kabir, the door that leads to Bhakti is who is ready to lay down his life has the right to enter it. Not all, but only the brave and the valiant can tread the path of Bhakti which is like the razor's edge; the one who wavers or trembles is bound to cut himself. Only he who is able to stand on it firmly can attain liberation. Bhakti involves the manna (mind). Mounted on the steed of love, the Bhakta must wield the sword of knowledge in his hand to conquer death and attain salvation. Bhakti is caused by and is attained through divine love; but that love is difficult to find. The wine of divine love is not easy to receive either. The one who serves it asks for your very life before pouring it out to you. There are so many who wait; but only he who is ready to give up his all, is able to drink of it. The ways of love are not easy, nor can the beloved be found with easy laughter. The search for God involves pain and suffering. Only he who knows the anguish of separation from him can hope to find him. Whether a king or a commoner, only he who holds love God dearer than his own life can obtain that love. 1

Kabir views God as nirguna and in that sense as impersonal and nameless. To

1. Bhakti and Bhakti Movement by Krishna Sarma, p.166

give him a name; he uses abstract and impersonal terms like Atamam, Tattva and Brahman. Kabir very often uses the name Rama also; but invariably in the symbolic sense to denote the same abstraction. He makes it very clear that his verses, which are regarded by people as mere sons, are infact expression of his own ideas about the Brahma (Brahma-vichara). According to him, the truth about the nirguna-Brahman can be understood only by few, the few who are endowed with viveka or the faculty of intellectual discrimination.

Kabir of course had no scholastic interest in the current controversies relating to theology and metaphysics connected with questions of the finality of the Saguna/Nirguna character of God; and of the duel/ non duel nature of His relation to man and to the phenomenal world. He regarded all such undertakings as futile and meaningless. According to Kabir it is impossible to describe the exact nature of God through the written word. He defies every description. He has no form, no shape and cannot be given any name. How then He be identified as Rama and Krishna, and how can His nature be fully grasped through philosophical expositions? Those who try to do so get worn out by speaking endlessly about it. The blazing glory of the Brahman can be known only through a personal encounter, i.e. through one's own inner experience.¹

Surprisingly enough in spite of this unambiguous assertions of Kabir scholars often manipulate his verses to show the presence of the concept of a personal God in them. The reason is simple, Kabir was a Bhakta and in modern scholarship, the idea

1. Bhakti and Bhakti Movement by Krishna Sarma, p.167

of a personal God is accepted as an integral part of Bhakti. Besides the fact that Kabir made frequent use of the name Rama in his verses, is easily interpretable as a mark of his being a worshiper of the personal deity Rama, the avatara of Vishnu. But as stated earlier, kabir had used the name Rama only in a symbolic sense. Rama, as a deity, had no significance whatsoever for Kabir. In fact he rejected the sanctity of the personality of the historic Rama in a most outspoken manner, leaving no scope for any ambiguity or misunderstanding. He stated categorically that his Rama was not the same as the avatara of Vishnu. He did not marry Sita, he was not born in the house of Dasaratha and he did not bring about the fall of Ravana. The Rama who did all that was mortal like anyone else. How could he be the immutable and eternal Reality which must remain free from birth and death? Those who worship God as the unborn and the unmanifest cannot worship Him in the form of a person, for God is never born and can have no human parentage. Nor can He live and act like mortals. Obviously, Kabir used the name Rama as an epithet for the Ultimate Reality which he regarded as nameless and undefinable. His Rama therefore is as th same as Aatma and the Brahman. The terms, Aatman Brahman, and Rama are often used by him close conjunction with each other. The oneness of their meaning can hardly be questioned. Kabir's Rama pervades all besides within man and is the one whom the Vedas, the Smiriti and the Puranas try to understand, but whose mystery is never solved. This Rama can be found only within ones self. In his own world the mystery of the name Rama used by him required serious thinking and an act of intellectual discrimination.

Kabir's thought is totally monastic. His God is the "creator in the created and the created in the creator who filleth all." He "pervadeth all", and is the "one in all". He is "here, there and everywhere"- "over the skies, in the underworld and all over." Kabir's Bhakti therefore, does not require the acceptance of any sense of dualism between God and man. For him, Bhakti is possible only when the feeling of the "otherness" of God is completely annihilated through jnana. In the state of Bhakti, the devotee is conscious of his higher as well as a liver of self, the two which reside within himself Kabir speaks of the polarity between the two alongside his monistic explanation of the Ultimate Reality. According to him, nothing is separate and other than the one cosmic reality that pervades the entire universe. It is that which exist in all- and everything that exists in it. This all- pervading Spirit is the God of Kabir. He lives in man like the pupil in the eye. That which is bodiless, abides in the body. Therefore, the feeling of otherness in realization to God is due to the lack of correct knowledge. It is caused by apparent differences of form and appearance. The Lord's servant should be such as is the Lord, the God. Only those who do not accept the inmate unity of things and the oneness of man and God looks around and wanders in a futile search for one who resides within his own self as the deer wander in the forest and continues to smell the grass in search of the musk which rests within it.¹

According to Kabir, God resides within one's heart. If one set out to search, one would find Him there. There is a mirror in the heart but it is difficult to look into it.

1. Bhakti and Bhakti Movement by Krishna Sarma, p.171

You are you, and are also the reflection that you see as yourself. The man of knowledge known the oneness according to him, must guide the spiritual quest. He advocates the exercise of Vichara (thought) and Veveka and pleads that obeisance of the two as well as their difference.

Kabir has preached that God is one, He is shapeless. He has neither face, beautiful or ugly, nor He has physique. He is free from life and death. These ideas have been versified by him in this way.

Saheb mera aik hai duja kaha na jae.¹

Duja jo kahu sahib khara rasae

(My Lord is only one, I am not accept other as my Master.

If I do sao, My Lord will be displeased with me.)

Ja ke munh matha nahin rup karup;

Pahup bas ten patra aisa tatua anup.²

Janam maran se rahit hai mrea sahels*soye;

Balihua us pir ke jin sarja sah koye

Listen o, men and women, take refuge in the one God,

He is one, there is no second

Ram, khuda, sakti, siva are one;

Tell me how to separate them.

1. Unpublished article, Dr.Mansoor Alam

2. ibid

While describing attitude of God (Sifat e Ilahiya) Kabir believed in the contemporary concept of Vedanta, Wajdatul Wajud or Hama Ust, as a result of which in spite of Qadr the faith of Jabr is evident from his verses. For example:

Sahib son jab howat hai bande te kuch nahin

Rai te purbat kare, parbat te rai

(Everything is from God and nothing from his servant; can change a mustard seed in to a mountain and a mountain into a mustard seed)¹

On Love (of God)

Love of God leads to the love of mankind and expresses through kindness, courtesy, generosity and nobility of action. Without love no lasting peace can be maintained in the world and our so being of the God, love is innately enshrined in us. Kabir says:

Kabir mata prem nirbaye bole sansar

Ghar sansar ka lobh pakre nahin ohar.

(Kabir is made of love of Lord, fearless does he callous to lures of the world and also charms of here).

Prem na bari upje, prem na bat bikaye

Raja praja jihe rache sis diye lejaye.²

1. Article by Dr. Mansoor Alam, Kolkata.

2. ibid

(Love grows neither in the garden nor sold in the market king or subject, who ever likes, let him purchase against his head).

Rata mata nam ka piya prem aghaye

Matwala didar ka mange mukti balye.¹

(I am indulged in His name and have drunk deep in the ocean of love; I am intoxicated with the presence of the Beloved, I don't seek salvation.)

According to Sufi only through purification of heart and rectitude of behavior, man can attain knowledge by self. Heart is the temple of God. When it is purified, it is free from ego, pride, anger, lust and avariciousness. It is the first step towards spiritualism.

Nahaya Dhuye ki bhaya jo man mail na jaye

Mel sada jal me rahe dhoye bas na jaye²

Zekr (Remembrance) of God

Zikr is a kind of prayer (chanting the name of God repeatedly of innovation). Like other sufis, Kabir also believes that chanting of God's name repeatedly makes Him salvation can be obtained only by God's name and by loving him. Kabir says:

Sumran sun man laiye jaise nad ka rang

Kahe Kabir bisre nahin pran tahe th sang.³

1. Unpublished Article, Dr. Mansoor Alam

2. Kabir Granthavali, p. 114

3. ibid, p. 114

On Confession of sin:

Confession of sin or begging pardon of God is purely Islamic concept and attitude.

Besides the poets of Persian and Urdu, Hindi poets have also versified this concept.

Kabir has also composed many verses on this topic. The following may be cited for example.

Dharma rai jab lekha manga, baki kiksa bhari

Abki bar bakas ko, sab khat karo nabera 1

On Compulsion in Religion

Sufis have always reminded their readers and followers that there is no compulsion or coercion in Islam,

Kabir says:

Allah avail din ko sahib jor nain farmave

Nivajo soi jo vichaare KALIMA akal hi janai.

Kabir believed in self-surrender and God's Bhakti. The Kabir panthis follow a life of singing the praises of God, prayers and a simple and pure life of devotion. Kabir recommends ceaseless singing of God's praises. He is against all ritualistic and ascetic methods as means to salvation. It is true that Kabir refers to some Yogic terms in describing the meditational and mystic methods of the yogis. But, there is no ground to suggest that he himself recommends the yogic path. Infact, far from recommending yoga, he is quite strong in condemning ascetic or yogic methods, and

1. Unpublished article, Dr. Mansoor Alam.

says that yogis, in their meditation, became prey to maya.¹

The moral tone is quite strong in Kabir's hymns. "Love them is given honour whose body and soul speak the truth." The ruby of goodness is greater than all the mines of rubies, all the wealth of three worlds resides in the goodness of heart. When the wealth of contentment is won, all other wealth is as dust." "Where there is mercy, there is strength, where there is forgiveness there is He." "The man who is kind and practices righteousness, who remains passive in the affairs of the world, who considers creatures of the world as his own self, he attains the immortal Being; the true God is ever with Him. Kabir suggests inward worship and remembrance of God. For him, true worship is only inwards.²

1. <http://www.hinduwebsite.com/secretdscripts/other/life.kabir>

2. ibid

4.2 Meaning of Religion (Rumi)

Stages of Religious life

For Rumi there are three stages of religious life all of which are important in their own way. To Rumi, faith occupies a very important place in religion. But this is an initial stage which belongs to those whose belief is not based upon rational understanding or experience.

Rumi, however, regards this stage to be of immense significance. The man with faith will ultimately reach the goal, provided he has a yearning and proper guidance. Rumi compares him to a thirsty blind man, for though he cannot see the stream ,yet if properly led, he reaches the destination and quenches his thirst. Thus, in Rumi there is no place for doubt. He says:

احتمی کن احتمی ز اندیشها

۱فکرشیر و گور دلها بیشها

"Abstain from (distracting) thoughts, abstain :thought is(like)the lion and the wild ass and (men's)hearts are the thickets(which they haunt)"

Rumi believes that a disciple who possesses such a firm faith and does not yield to doubt is better than his pseudo-guide, who only pretends and is devoid of firm faith. Rumi beautifully, explained it under the title "Explaining how it may happen,(though)rarely, that a disciple sincerely puts his faith in a false imposter (and believes)that he, is a (holy) person and by means of this faith attains into a (spiritual)

1. Rumi, Mathnavi, i, 2909

degree which his Shaykh has never (even) dreamed of.

But faith, which is supported by rational understanding, is far superior to mere blind acceptance. Hence faith with rational understanding is a higher phase of religious life. To Rumi only that man knows the essence of religion and is a true believer who has made rational understanding and has experienced reality. All others are only traditional followers. A man of true faith knows the virtues of his journey, whereas the man of blind faith does not; he only follows 'Imitation and research' is one of the most important topics with Rumi. He asserts that the people, who are mere followers and have no rational understanding ,are not true believers.It is why Rumi advises:

ز آتش ار علمت یقین شد از سخن

پختگی جو در یقین منزل مکن¹

"If your knowledge of fire has been turned to certainty by words (alone), seek to be cooked (by the fire itself)and do not abide in the certainty (of knowledge derieved from others.)

To stress this point further Rumi narrates the story of a fox and an ass. He says that ones a lion, who feel ill, asked a fox to fetch him an ass. He assured the fox that he would eat only a portion and let her feed on the rest of it. The fox set out and eventually come across an ass who was already hungry. The fox, with her due cunning, offered her service of leading him to a beautiful grassy ground .But the donkey understood the trick and delivered a sermon saying that he could

lead a life of a 'true faqir' and that God, being responsible would himself send him his food. But the fox did not lose heart. She kept on temping him and eventually the ass fell a prey to her guile. So, forgetting his sermon, the ass was led to the lion's hiding place and was eaten up after all.⁵ By narrating this story, Rumi manta ins that the people ,who just deliver sermons without having true knowledge and understanding, are not people of true conviction. Only that faith which comes after rational understanding and experience is true and firm.

Thus rational understanding is very important in Rumi's thought as "Rumi's uniqueness lies in the fact that in him reason is wedded to a wide and deep religious experience"

Discovery Highest stage According to Rumi,a true religious man after passing the stage of rational understanding reaches the highest stage of religious life where he seen Reality face to face,Rumi says:

علم جویای یقین باشد بدان

و آن یقین جویای دیدست و عیان¹

"Known that knowledge is a seeker of certainty, and certainty is a seeker of vision and intuition"Seek this (difference between knowledge and intuitive certainly)now,In (the sura which begins with) Alhakum,after (the word)kalla and after

1. Rumi Mathnavi, iii, 4121-2,4125

(the word lau talaimun)

See in Alhakum, the explanation of this, (namely) that the knowledge of certainty becomes the intuition of certainty.

And this direct experience of reality is the real aim of religious life. without this experience, man remains blind. He says:

آدمی دیدست و باقی پوست است

دید آنست آن که دید دوستست¹

"Man is eye, and (all) the rest is (worthless) skin; the sight of that (eye) is (consists in) seeing the beloved."

Rumi calls discovery *دیدن* (didan), which may be translated "a direct experience of God, not through a glaso, darkly, but face to face, with all the veils of the senses stripped aside, as the Muslim mystics would say." Thus, "for him (Rumi) God is a reality to be experienced and apprehended as more real than the objects of sense-experience similarly, the relation of man to God is not a matter merely to be rationalized and moulded into a dogma but to be realized in the depth of one's own being where the human gets into tune with the divine and the finite is embraced by the infinite."

The Beautific Vision is closely connected with fana, connecting on a verse of Rumi. Dr. R.A. Nicholson explained; "The mystic who has died to self enjoys the Beautific Vision (didan); but until his fana is complete, the idea (khayal) of a bliss not yet realized, which involves the sacrifice of the actually

1. Rumi Mathnavi, iii, p.22

existing self and all that belongs to it, causes him to suffer the pains and agitation of love."¹

Thus, the mode of knowledge has now been transformed by 'heart'. And it is essential because according to Rumi, as we change our means of land-travelling when we are put to sea, so also the means of the seeker are changed. Now Rumi says a lot about the 'perception by 'heart''. He compares 'heart' to a mirror and recommends its cleansing. The more clean it is, the cleaner it reflects the face of Reality. He says:

هر کسی اندازه روشن دلی

غیب را بیند بقدر صیقل

هر که صیقل بیش کرد بیش او دید

بیشتر آمد برو صورت پدید ²

"Everyone, according to the measure of his spiritual enlightenment, sees the things unsees in proportion to the polishing (of the hearts mirror). The more he polishes, the more he sees and the more visible does the form (of things unseen) become to him."

Like a true mystic Rumi yearns for Beautific Vision. Underhill quotes Rumi, according to whom, "the mystic life is a life of love, that the object of the mystics final quest and of his constant intuition is an object of adoration and supreme desire.

1. R.A. Nicholson, Commentary on Mathnavi, i and ii, p.118

2. Rumi Mathnavi, iv, 2909, 2910.

'with thee, a prison would be rose garden; oh thou ravisher of hearts ; with thee, hell would be paradise, oh thou cheerer of souls, said Jalalud-din.'

Rumi is diametrically different from Mu'tazilites who "hold that vision is not possible without place and direction. As God is beyond place and direction, therefore, a vision of Him is possible neither in this world nor in the hereafter."

Mystic and Prophetic experience:

تیغ در ز دادخانه اولیا است

دیدن ایشان شمارا کیمیا است¹

"The sword (of reality) is in the armoury of the saints: to see (and associate with) them is for you (as precious as) the Elixir".

About the prophets ,Rumi says:

چون خدا اندر نیاید در عیان

نائب حق اندر این پیغمبران

نه غلط گفتم که نائب با منوب

گردو پندارای قبیح آید نه خوب²

1. Rumi Mathnavi, i, 716

2. ibid, i, 673-675.

"In as much as God comes not into sight, these prophets are vicars of God.

Nay, I have said (these) wrongly; for if you suppose that the vicar and He who is represented by the vicar are through, it (such a thought) is bad not good.

The last chapter, "The Apex of religious life" shall further develop the subject. However, for Rumi "there is no fundamental difference between sainthood and prophet hood.¹ Rather mystic consciousness is sometimes more comprehensive than prophetic consciousness. The example of Khizr and Moses is worthy of note. Rumi says:

"If Khizr stove the boat in the sea, (yet) in Khizr's staving there are a hundred rightness. The imagination of Moses, not understanding his (spiritual) illumination and excellence, was screened from (the comprehension of) that (act of Khizr). Do not thou fly without wings?"¹

It may be noted that in sufi literature Khizr, "though himself sometimes ranked among the prophet, in relation to Moses he stands pre-eminently for the inner light of stain ship as opposed to the intellectual, legalistic, and apostolic aspects of prophecy. To elaborate, "wilayah being the general term in which nabuwwah and risalah are comprised as particular modes, it may be said that the prophet qua saint is superior to the prophet qua apostle (rasal) and lawgiver (musharri). Khizr typifies the esoteric side of prophecy; he possessed a knowledge that was denied to Moses, for sometimes God withholds from the apostle knowledge of the mystery of the

1. R.A. Nicholson's Commentary, i&ii, p.25

Decree (sirru'l-qadar), because, if he knew it, he might fall in his duty, viz. delivery of the Message with which God has entrusted him."(fusus,257)¹

However, it is important to note that according to Rumi neither the prophetic nor the mystic consciousness have a break with normal consciousness. They have pragmatic value, as we shall discuss in sequel.

1. R.A. Nicholson's Commentary, i and ii, p.27

Meaning of religion (Kabir)

Kabir was not a systematiser and was completely non-sectarian in his outlook. His antecedents, therefore, cannot be fixed in any one system of philosophy or sectarian theology. Taken in the total context of the history of Indian religious philosophical thought, astika as well as nastika, there is very little in Kabir which can be regarded as entirely new. And yet he cannot be taken as a mere eclectic thinker. Kabir was the initiator of religious movement which had a distinct character of its own. The originality that marks his thinking lies in the nature of his selection of what he considers as the essentials of religion. In other words, it lies in what he accepted, and in what he rejected while drawing upon the existing traditions. He had not considered it necessary to stick to any fixed and formal religious tradition. He affirmed only such ideas of the ancient religious heritage which lent strength to his own religious ideology; and openly condemned those that were not in keeping with it. The sources of Kabir's inspiration therefore, can be determined only in the light of the predominant his antecedents can be traced in all such earlier traditions which bear resemblance with his thought.¹

As stated earlier, a spiritual view of God constitute the fundamentals of the concerned he advocated the general principles of Yoga. On the whole the religious path adopted by Kabir falls in the realm of mysticism. According to him, personal spiritual experience alone could be taken as the final proof of the Ultimate Reality. In all these respects, Kabir had drawn his fundamental ideas from the Upanishadic Nirguna tradition. Nevertheless, the nature of his reasoning, and his freedom of

1. Bhakti and The Bhakti Movement. A New Perspective. A Study in the History of Ideas, by Krishna Sharma, p.177

thought and who nourished the monistic tradition and its impersonal view of God always accepted and sanctioned by astikas despite their overall commitment to that tradition. The most striking example of this is his attitude towards the caste system and the Hindu cult based on the worship of personal deities. The Brahmin sages and theologians who had kept alive the monism of the Upanishads could never question the sanctity of the caste system and the prevalence of the worship of personal deities and idols. They could never do so because of these having deep roots in the totality of Hinduism. From the standpoint of pure reason, however, these were incompatible with the ultimacy of the spirit and the unity of Being, nothing escaped the questioning and criticism of Kabir. No religious tradition, whether of ritual or doctrine, was regarded as infallible by him. Although he had drawn heavily from the Hindu religio-intellectual tradition, he showed no qualms in rejecting the caste system and idol-worship which were deeply entrenched in Hinduism. He pursued the Hindu monistic ideas to their rational and without caring for the popular religious sentiments and social conventions.

Here, the poet said that we must take into account the fact that Kabir was a Muslim. Considering the very nature of the religion Islam, Kabir's Muslim background can in itself explain his abhorrence for the caste system and idol worship. Besides, being a Muslim he was under no constraint to show any hesitation in derecognizing the sanctity attached by the Hindus to the caste system, and to the worship of various Gods and goddesses and their idols. This made it possible for him to be totally rationalistic in his approach to the Hindu thought and to carry

Hindu monism to its logical conclusion. No doubt, traces of the attitude similar to that of Kabir can also be found amongst the non-Muslim Sahajayani Siddhas and the natha Panthis who preceded him during the medieval period. But it was the Muslim julaha kabir who served as the greatest source of inspiration for the medieval Nirguna bhaktas who subsequently arose from within the Hindu fold. Like Kabir, they zealously upheld the Hindu monistic tradition, but had rejected the caste system and the worship of personal deities and their idols.

Kabir's religion strikes us as the shaping of a medieval astika tradition showing of a medieval astika elements; whereas his philosophy and faith were rooted in the astika soil, the vitality and freedom of his individual reasoning carried a clear echo of the nastika tradition. The main characteristics of the new astika tradition were a simplified monistic philosophy, advocacy of yoga in a popular form and a rationalistic and critical approach to all external aspects of formal religion. It was astika in nature in so far as it upheld the ultimacy of the Atma and derived its inspiration from the philosophies of the Vedanta and yoga. It was also marked by a tendency to attack the established formal religious beliefs and rituals a thing reminiscent of the attitude of nastikas against orthodoxy.¹

Thus, Kabir represents a dynamic combination of both the astika and nastika traditions. It can be more fruitful perhaps to trace the antecedents of his Nirguna school of Bhakti in the developments which led to the intermingling of these two traditions instead of connecting him with any particular sect or school of thought.

1. Bhakti and The Bhakti Movement. A New Perspective. A Study in the History of Ideas, by Krishna Sharma, p.178

The process of their convergence had started long before Kabir. Infact one of the most significant development of early medieval period was the imperceptible interpenetration and admixture of the astika and nastika streams. During this period of the confluence, the demarcating lines between the two had became indefinite, and their differences less fundamental. Precepts and practices which were primarily associated with the astikas were beginning to find equal acceptance amongst the nastikas and vice-versa. Consequently, the principle of Atman and the monistic view of Reality in the field of siddhanta and the practice of yoga in that of sadhana (in their Brahminic form) had got incorporated in the nastika Buddhist and jaina traditions. Similarly, the critical and unorthodox approach of the nastikas had penetrated into certain sects also. The works of the Buddhist siddhas, as compiled in the Doha Kosa and the Jaina works like the Pahudha Doha of Muni ranshima are striking examples of the former, and the texts like the yoga Vasishtha, of the latter.¹

As a result of the above trends, a new religious current had emerged in the early medieval period around the 11th and 12th centuries, its main features were (a) a simplified monistic philosophy of a more popular form, and (b) the articulation of religious finalities in terms of mysticism. It was marked by the rejection of the established religious norms and rituals at various levels and a complete disregard for scholasticism and theological controversies. The new religious force that was taking shape on these lines was essentially astika in nature. It accepted the concepts of the

1. Bhakti and The Bhakti Movement. A New Perspective. A Study in the History of Ideas, by Krishna Sharma, p.179

Atman and the Nirguna Brahman and derived its inspiration from the fundamentals of the astika philosophies of advaita Vedanta and Yoga.¹

Kabir held that religion without Bhakti was no religion at all, and that ascetism, fasting and alm giving had no value if unaccompanied by bhajan (devotional worship). By means of Ranaini, Shakas and Sakhis he imparted religious instruction to Hindus and Musalmans alike. He had no preference for either religion. He thought aloud and never made in his object merely to please hearers.²

He thoroughly scrutinized the bases of ritualistic superstitions like visiting places of pilgrimage. He observed:

"What abolde is that which is called secure,

Where fear is dispelled, and one

Abideth without fear?

The heart is not satisfied with pilgrimage

To the banks of sacred stream;

Man remaineth entangled with good and bad acts.

Nothing is gained by pleasing men; God is not a simpleton.

Worship the Lord, the only God;

Searching the Gurus is the true oblation,

1. Bhakti and The Bhakti Movement. A New Perspective. A Study in the History of Ideas, by Krishna Sharma, p.179

2. Society and Culture in Medieval India, by Abdul Rashid, p.245

If salvation be obtained by bathing in water.

The frogs which are continually bathing will obtain it."¹

Kabir equally rejected the Muslim ritual of prayer and hajj to Mekka.

"it is not by fasting and repeating prayers and the creed that one goeth to heaven.

The inner veil of the temple of Mekka is in man's heart, if the truth be known.

Just decision should be thy prayer, knowledge of God, the insrutable one, thy creed,

He reconstructed the Muslims for slaughter of cows and the Brahmanas for performing animal sacrifice. He ridiculed the Muslim practice of circumcision and the Brahmanas for wearing the sacred thread. One cannot become a true Muslim only by being circumcised or a true Brahmaṇa by only wearing the sacred thread.

He was also vehemently against the system of giving feast after death criticizing the Sraddha ceremony, he observed:

Nobody obeyth his parents when alive, yet he giveth them feast when dead;

Say how shall the poor parents obtain what ther ravens and the dogs have eaten.

People of his time believed in lucky or unlucky days and hours. People avoided taking meal in the evening. He advised them to remove such false delusions.²

Kabir did not classify himself as Hindu or Muslim, Sufi or Bhakta. The legends surrounding his lifetime attest to his strong aversion to establishes religions. From his

1. Society and Culture in Medieval India, by Abdul Rashid, p.246

2. ibid

poems, expressed in homely metaphors and religious symbols drawn indifferently from Hindu and Muslim belief, it is impossible to say that he was Brahman or –Sufi. Vedantist or Vaishnavite. He is, as he says, himself, "at once the child of Allah and Ram. In fact, Kabir always insisted on the concept of Koi bole Ram Ram koi khudai...., which means that someone may shout the Muslim name of God, but God is the one who made the whole world.¹

In Kabir's wide and rapturous vision of Universe he never loses touch with the common life His feet are firmly planted upon earth; his lofty and passionate apprehensions are perpetually controlled by the activity of sane and vigorous intellect, the alert commonsense so often found in person of real mystical genious. The constant instance on simplicity and directness, the hatred of all abstractions and philosophizing, the ruthless criticism of external religion: these are amongst his most marked characteristics. God is the root whence all meneifestations, "Material" and "spiritual", alike proceed and God is the only need of man. "Happiness shall be yours when you come to the Root." Hence, to those who keep their eyes on the "one thing needful" denominations creeds, ceremonies, the conclusions of philosophy, the disciplines of asceticism, are matters of comparative indifference. They represent merely the different angles from which the soul may approach that simple union with Brahma, which is its goal, and are useful only insofar as they contribute to this consummation. So through-going is Kabir's eclecticism that he seems by turns Vedantist and Vaishnavite Pantgiest and transcendentalist, Brahmin and Sufi. In the

1. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/kabir>.

effort to tell the truth about that ineffable apprehension, so vast and yet so near, which controls his life, he seizes and twins together-as he might have woven together contrasting threads upon his loom- symbolic and ideas drawn from the most violent and conflicting philosophies and faiths.¹

One popular legend of his death, which is even taught in schools in India (although) in more of a morale context than a historical one says that after his death his Muslim and Hindu devotees fought over his proper burial rites. The problem arose since Muslim custom called for the burial of their dead, whereas Hindus cremated their dead. The sense is depicted as two groups fighting around his coffin one clearing that Kabir was a Hindu, and the other claiming that Kabir was a Muslim. However, when they finally open Kabir's coffin, they found the body missing. Instead there was a small book in which the Hindus and Muslims wrote all his sayings that they could remember; some even say a bunch of his favorite flowers were placed. The legend goes on to state that the fighting was revealed, and both groups looked upon the miracle as an act of divine intervention. In Maghar, his tomb or Dargah and Samadhi Mandir still stand side by side.²

1. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/kabir>

2. ibid

4.3 Perception of Asheq and Mashuq/Atma and Paramatma

To Rumi, in human life there are certain values which contribute in shaping the destiny of the self, i. e, to develop human personality to its full stature, and to earn freedom and immorality of the self. 'Ishq, Intellect, Action and Faqr may be regarded as the most precious values in this connection, according to Rumi.

1.Ishq.

What is 'Ishq?

Literally 'Ishq is the higher form of love. But Rumi has used the word Ishq in the wider sense. To him it is not love of physical body. Rumi believes that the lower sentimental attachment with a male or a female in the result of eating wheat and thus does not deserve to be called 'Ishq. He says:

عشق ها ی کزپی رنگی بود

عشق نبود عاقبت ننگی بود¹

"Those loves which are for the sake of a colour (outward beauty) are not love; in the end they are a disgrace."

Instead to Rumi, 'Ishq is that burning desire of the self which yearns to meet its source, i. e. God. Rumi says:

عشق آن زندہ گزین کو باقیست

کر شراب جان فزا یست سا قیست

1. Rumi Mathnavi, i, 205

عشق آن بگزین که جمله انبیا

یافتند از عشق او کارو کیا¹

"Choose the love of that living one who is everlasting, who gives thee to drink of the wine that increases life.

Choose the love of Him from whose love all the prophets gained power and glory."

Rumi lays a great stress on this sense of 'Ishq a view which is generally upheld by mystics. "The jewel of mystical literature glow with this intimate and impassioned love of the Absolute; which it is clothed and becomes applicable to mystics of every race and creed."

Besides Rumi understand 'Ishq in the sense of desire to assimilate and absorb which results in growth and evolution. By assimilation Rumi means one form of life losing itself in another. He says:

گر نبودی عشق هستی گی بدی

کی زدی نان بر تو و کی تو شدی

نان تو شد از چه ز عشق و اشتها

و رنه نان را کی بدی تاجان رها

عشق نان مرده را ذی جان کند

جان که فانی بود جاویدان کند²

1. Rumi Mathnavi, i, 219-220

2. ibid, i, 2012-14

"If there had not been love, how should there have been existence. How should bread have attached itself to you. And become (assimilated to) you?

The bread became you through what? Through your love and appetite; otherwise how should the bread have had any assess to the (vital) spirit.

Love makes the dead bread in to spirit; it makes the spirit that was perishable everlasting".

To elaborate, "Rumi finds the principle of growth and development through the organic power of assimilation as the height principle of explanation- Reality presence to us nothing but qualitative transformation. Fuel turning into fire and bread turning into life and consciousness point to the incommensurability of the cause and the effect."¹

Further, Ishq according to Rumi is mobilizing force which works behind every action in life; all big deeds have the force of Ishq behind them. Rumi says:

جسم خاک از عشق بر افلاک شد

کوه در رقص آمد و چالاک شد

عشق جان طور آمد عاشقا

طور مست و خر موسی صاعقا²

"Through love the earthly body soared to the skies. The mountain began to dance and became nimble:

1. Khalifa Abdul Hakim, The Metaphysics of Rumi, p.p. 49-50

2. Rumi Mathnavi, i, 25-26

Love inspired Mount Sina, O lover (so that) Sinai (was made) drunken and Moses fell in a swoon.

Again:

"Though outwardly it appears that love is born from me;

Yet you know that in Reality love gave birth to me?"

Ishq possesses a daring nature. Even that cannot frighten Ishq. Rumi puts it beautifully thus:

سنگ کی ترسد ز باران چون کلوخ¹

"How should the stone be afraid of rain as the cold (is)"

Again, Rumi says:

کی رسند آن خائنان در گرد عشق

کاسمان را فرش سازد درد عشق²

"How should those fearful ones overtake love? For love's passion makes the (lofty) heaven its carpets."

Next, Rumi believes that Ishq is intensified by separation, as it turns the rawness of the lover in to ripeness. Or, in other words, the undeveloped egos are developed by separation. He says:

1. Rumi' Impact on Iqbal's religious Thought, p. 63

2. Rumi Mathnavi, v, 2193

خام را جز آتشش هجو و فراق

کی پزد کی وارها ند از نفاق¹

"Save the fire of absence and separation, who I (what) will cook the raw one? Who (what) will deliver him from hypocrisy?"

Rumi untiringly enumerates the value of Ishq. To him Ishq has a therapeutics value. It is Ishq which makes all the hardships easy. Rumi says;

از محبت خارها گل می شود

و ز محبت سر کهان می شود

از محبت دارتختی می شود

و ز محبت بار بختی می شود

از محبت سجن گلشن می شود

و ز محبت خانه روشن می شود

از محبت نار نوری می شود

و ز محبت دیوچوری می شود²

"Through love thorns become roses and

Through love vinegar becomes sweet wine

Through love the stake becomes a throne

1. Rumi Mathvavi, i, 3058

2. ibid, ii, p.330

Through love the reverse of fortune seems good future.

Through love a prison seems a rose bower,

Through love a great full of ashes seems a garden.

Through love a burning fire is a pleasing light

Through love the Devil becomes a Houri."

According to Rumi Ishq plays a vital role in strengthening the self.

از محبت دردها صافی شود

از محبت دردها شافی شود

از محبت مرده زنده می کنند

¹ از محبت شاه بنده می کنند

Through love dregs taste like pure wine,"

Through love pains are as healing balms

Through love the death rise to life

Through love the king becomes slave

Ishq sees Reality directly; Rumi believes that Ishq experiences Reality directly.

He says that as the astrolabe serves to attain the knowledge of stars, so also Ishq serves to attain the knowledge of God. He says;

علت عاشق ز علتها جدا است

1. Rumi Matnavi, ii, 1530, 1531

عشق اصطراط لاب اسرار خدا است¹

"The lover's ailment is separate from all other ailments. Love is the astrolabe of the mysteries of God."

Again Rumi says:

آدمی را هست حس تن سقی

لیک در باطن یکی خلقی عظیم²

"Man's bodily senses are infirm, but he hath a potent nature within."

Further there is a height of ecstasy and emotion in the Ishq of Rumi as seen in his Divan Shams Tabriz.

To him all voices sounded empty save those of love. Rumi says;

"Save the melody of love,

Whatever melody I heard in the world

Was the noise of drum³

The taste of love is dearest of Rumi. No taste of any other thing can be compared with that of love.

"I tasted everything,

I found nothing better than you.

When I dove into the sea,

1. Rumi Mathnavi, i, 110

2. ibid, iv, 3759

3. Diwan-Shams, by Reza Areseh, Rumi The Persian the Sufi, p.76

I found no part like you.

I opened all the casks,

I tasted from a thousand jars,

Yet none but that rebellious wine of yours.

Touched my lips and inspired my heart. 1

Rumi proclaims to be all love. He says: "I am not the moon, or the universe, or thunder or clouds."

I am all love, I am all soul by your soul. Intellect another value which is essential for the development of the self. Though 'Ishq stands supreme, yet intellect occupies a very important place in human life. It is "the gift of God- its fountain is in the midst of the soul." 2

Rumi acknowledges, intellect's legitimate sphere of activity, and its value. It is why he prays:

پارب آن تمییزده ما را بخواست

تا شناسیم آن نشان کز ز راست 3

"Lord, grant us according to our desire such discernment that we may know the faults in indication from the true."

1. Divan-i- Shams, quoted by A. reza Arasteh, Rumi The Persian, p.86

2. Rumi's Impact on Iqbal's Religious Thought, p.70

3. Rumi Mathnavi, iv, 1965

The influence of the prophet's saying- 'God ! grant me knowledge of the ultimate nature of things is clear from this verse.'

Thus, the place of thought is duly recognized in the philosophy of Rumi. Rumi gives an important place to thought. He says:

گر گلست اندیشه تو گلشنی

ور بود خاری تو هیمه گلخنی¹

"if your thought is a rose, you are a rose garden, and if it is a thorn you are fuel for the bath-stove."

Commenting on this verse, R.A. Nicholson says, "The worth of a man depends on what he thinks (Fikratu'l- insane qimatuhu) : his ideals make him what he is now and what he will be hereafter."²

پس چو می بینی که از اندیشه

قائمست اندر جهان هر پیشه

خانها و قصرها و شهرها

کوهها و دشتها و نهرها

هم زمین و بحر و هم مهر و فلک

زنده از وی بمچو از دریا سمک

پس چرا از ابلهی پیش تو کور

1. Rumi, Mathnavi, ii, 278

2. R.A. Nicholson's Commentary on Rumi's Mathnavi, I &ii, 278-279

تن سلیمانست و اندیشه چومور¹

"So, when you see that from a thought every craft in the world (arises and) subsists-(that) houses and palaces and cities, mountains and plains and rivers, earth and ocean as well as sun and sky, are living derive their life.) from it as fishes from the sea-then why in your foolishness, O blind one, does the dody seem to you a Solomon, and thought (only) as an ant?"

The Quran attaches great importance to reflection and the influence on Rumi in this respect is obvious. The Quran says;

"And He has subjected
To you, as from Him,
All that is in the heavens
And on earth; behold,
In that are sings indeed
For those who reflect."

This is why in sufi literature stress is laid on (al-tafukkur) which may be translated as meditation.

This is an indispensable complement of the rites because it gives value to the free initiative of thought.

1. Rumi, Mathnavi, ii, 1034-1027

2. Rumi's Impact on Iqbal's Religious Thought, p.72

According to Rumi intellect is not separate from Intuition (Ishq) it is organically related to the latter and a necessary condition thereof. Rather, Ishq is the higher form of intellect. Rumi says:

این محبت هم نتیجه دانش است

کی گزاره بر چنیس تختی نشست

"This love, moreover is the result of knowledge: who(ever) sat in foolishness on such a throne."

Dr R.A. Nicholson specifies Rumi's position thus, "Rumi however does not make any such distinction between the Gnostic (Arif) and the love (Ashiq), for him, knowledge and love are inseparable and co-equal aspect of the same reality.¹

Without the company of 'Ishq' intellect reaches but a short way. Rumi says:

آزمودم عقل دور اندیش را

بعد ازین دیوانه سازم خویش را²

"I have tired far-thinking (provident) intellect; henceforth I will make myself mad."

Again, Rumi says:

عقل جزوی عشق را منکر بود

گرچه بنماید که صاحب سر بود

1. R.A. Nicholson's Commeantary, i & ii, p.294

2. Rumi Mathnavi, ii, 2332

زیرک و دانست ا ما نیست نیست

¹ تا فرشته لا نشد آهریمنیست

"Partial (discursive reason) is a denier of Love, though it may give out that it is a confident.

It is clever and knowing, but it is naught (devoid of self- existence): until the angel has become naught, he is an Ahriman (devil).

Further, Rumi believes that discursive knowledge sees merely the surface of things and life of man. It raises acute problems of adjustment. Rumi relates an interesting story of a grammarian:

"A grammarian once embarked on a boat and man haughtily asked the boatman if he had studied grammar to which the boatman shook his head. "then half of your life has been wasted," declared the scholar. The man pondered unhappily over this verdict for sometime. By chance a storm brought the boat to the edge of a whirlpool. Turning to the scholar the boatman inquired, 'do you know how to swim?'

'No', he replied, to which the boatman reported',

'Now your whole life is wasted."²

The comparison of intellect and "Ishq" which Rumi makes in this connection is very significant. He brings out the limitations of the former, and the primacy of the later.

1. Rumi Mathnavi, i, 1982-83

2. Rumi The Persian, Reza Areseh, p. 52

To him, intellect is afraid of death whereas "Ishq is daring. He says:

عقل لرزان از اجل و آن عشق شوخ¹

"Reason is trembling with fear of death, but love is bold...."

Next, he regards intellect as Iblish (craftiness) and 'Ishq' as Abam (Vicegerent of God on earth with indissoluble faith). He says:

داند او کونیک بخت و محر مست

زیرکی ز ابلیس و عشق از آدمست²

"He that is blessed and familiar (with spiritual mysteries) knows that intelligence is of Iblis, while love is of Adam."

1. Rumi, Mathnawi, v, 4226.

2. Ibid, iv,1402

Aatma –Paramatma (Kabir)

Two types of soul (atma)

1. Jiva-atma- The individual soul, known as the living entity.
2. Param-atma- The Supersoul, known as the Supreme Lord, who resides in the hearts of all living entities as the witness.

Both the supreme Lord and the living entities known as atma. The supreme Lord is called the atma, the brahma or the jiva.

Both the Paramatma and the Jivatma, being transcendent to the material energy, are called atma. Generally people have many wrong conceptions about both of them. The wrong conception of Jivatma is to identify the material body with the pure soul, and the wrong conception of Paramatma is to think Him on an equal level with the living entity.

In the Upanishads it is explained that there are two types of souls which are technically known as Jiva-atma and Param-atma. Jiva-atma, or the individual soul, is the living entity and param-atma refers to the Supreme Lord who expands Himself as the Supersoul, who enters into the hearts of all living entities as well as all atoms.

This is also confirmed in Bhagavad-Gita where it is stated that besides the living entity, who tries to enjoy in his physical body, there is another, a transcendental enjoyer who is the Lord, the supreme proprietor, who exists as the overseer and guide, and who is known as the Supersoul. He is not an ordinary living entity, but the plenary expansion of the Supreme Lord. Because monist philosophers and impersonalists take the soul and supreme soul to be one, they think that there is no

difference between the Supersoul and the individual soul. To clarify this the Lord says that He is the representation of Param-atma in every body. He is different from the individual soul; he is parah, transcendental.

The individual soul deluded by material energy, tries to enjoy the activities of particular types of bodies offered by material nature, but the Supersoul is present not as finite enjoyer nor as one taking part in bodily activities, but as the witness and permission giver. He is present within to sanction the individual soul's desires for material enjoyment.¹

The Supersoul fulfills the desires of the atomic soul as one friend fulfills the desires of another. The Upanishads compare the soul and Supersoul to two friendly birds sitting within the same tree. One of the birds (the individual atomic soul) is eating the fruit of the tree, and the other bird (the Supersoul) is simply watching His friend, of these two birds-although they are similar in their characteristic natures-one is captivated by the fruits of the material tree. While the other, who is satisfied, is simply witnessing the activities of His friend.

The Supreme Lord, who enters the hearts of all living entities in the form of the Supreme is compared to the witnessing bird. The other bird, the fruit eater (living entity), who is enchanted by the fruits of the material enjoyment, has forgotten his relationship with his friend. Forgetfulness of this relationship by the atomic soul is the cause of one's changing his position from one tree to another. Thus the Jiva soul

1. <http://www.yoga-philosophy.com/eng/2souls.html>

is struggling very hard within the tree of the material body, but as soon as he turns his attention to his friend the Supersoul, the subordinate bird immediately becomes free from all lamentation.¹

The Katha-Upanishad states that although two birds are in the same tree, the eating bird which has to face the reaction of his activities fully engrossed with anxiety and moroseness the enjoyer of the fruits of the tree, while the other bird, who is the witnessing Lord, maintains His transcendental position without being affected by the material atmosphere. If somehow the individual soul turns his face towards his friend the Supersoul, the suffering living entity becomes free from all anxieties.

The fact is that individual living entities are eternally part and parcel of the Supreme Lord, and both of them are very intimately related as friends. But the living entity has the tendency to reject the sanction of the Supreme Lord and act independently in an attempt to dominate the supreme nature, and because he has this tendency, he is called the marginal energy of the Supreme Lord. The living entity can be situated either in the material energy or the spiritual energy. As long as he is conditioned by the material energy, the Supreme Lord, as his friend, the Supersoul, stays with him just to get him to return to take him back to the spiritual energy, but due to his minute independence, the individual entity is continually rejecting the association of spiritual atmosphere.²

1. <http://www.yoga-philosophy.com/eng/2souls.html>

2. ibid

This misuse of independence is the cause of his material strife in the conditioned nature. The Lord, therefore, is giving advice and instruction from within and from without. From without He gives instructions through such Vedic scriptures as the Bhagavad-gita, and from within He acts as the Supersoul to enlighten the conditioned soul about his spiritual nature.¹

Jivatma or individual soul, and Paramatma the Supersoul are quantitatively different, but qualitatively similar. Jivatma is spirit, and Paramatma is spirit. But the Jivatma is tiny subatomic particle of spirit, and the Paramatma is the unlimited, infinite spirit. This philosophy is called inconceivable, simultaneous oneness and differences.

Jivatma and Paramatma are one in quality but different in quantity. We have some creative power, and God has creative power, therefore we are qualitatively one with God. We can create some tiny satellites and launch them into orbit around the earth. But the Paramatma has created millions of gigantic planets and stars floating in unlimited space. So we have got some very tiny quantity of creative power, but we can not create like Paramatma. That is the difference.²

The question is really very simple, and the answer is also very simple. Paramatma is very great, you are very small. Certainly, the Jivatma is part and parcel of the Paramatma. But Paramatma is different from individual person from the Aatma, and also vastly superior both in quality and position.

1. <http://www.yoga-philosophy.com/eng/2souls.html>

2. <http://www.esoteric-teaching.org/crossing/seeking-absolute.truth/secrets-of-the-soul/>

Because we are similar to Paramatma in quality. We have some independent will. Paramatma has supreme independence, complete and unlimited independence. We are completely dependent on Paramatma but have a little independence also. But when we misuse that little independence, both individually and collectively, to go against the purpose of Paramatma we create havoc.

Paramatma is certainly responsible for the creation of both the Jivatma, and this material world, but He is not responsible for our misuse of our tiny independence. Just like a father certainly creates his children; but if the child becomes a thief, does it mean the father is responsible?

Jivatma means the individual self and Paramatma means God. Vedas in their earlier sections revealed the existence of God to man. Man is told of the ways of God, his nature and teachings. God is someone to be loved, because he is himself an embodiment of infinite love. He is revealed as the very creator, sustainer and also the destroyer of the world. Just as all musicians in an orchestra have to tune themselves to a basic note being played by one, so also every person has to tune him or herself to that basic harmony and order of the world called God. This facilitates bringing about a holistic vision. Such a person is never alone, on the other hand such person always has company of the highest embodiment of knowledge, love and powers. It is well known fact that it is our thinking which carves out our personality, thus with a single stroke the Vedic masters saw to it that all their followers not only retain the thought of the best and highest but also ultimately be an embodiment of all what God represents.

The Vedic masters do not merely stop at revealing the existence of God. All religion and religious masters have been talking about these things. The unique aspect of Vedas is to reveal that there is a state in this very life and this very body where this Jivatma discovers its total identity with Paramatma. It was an experience beyond seeking. It was total liberation from all limitations of time, space and objectivity. They called it Moksha-the total freedom, the ultimate goal of human life. They discovered that Jivatma is & always was Paramatma alone. The duality was born out of ignorance. The seeker is the sought. Like in a dream a person erroneously takes oneself to be something which one is not and suffers unnecessarily, so also are the suffering of man. The final leap to total freedom and fulfillment is merely by some knowledge, the knowledge of self.

Vedanta the science of revealing the identity

It is interesting to note the two words Jiv-atma and Param-atma. Both have the word 'atma' in common. Atma means the self, that which reveals as the 'T' in the hearts of all. When this 'T' is seen to have a sense of limitation, along with a sense of enjoyer ship and doership, then such 'T' is referred to as the Jiva-atma. A Jiva is someone who sees himself to be limited by space and time-he is at one place alone and not every where, and his existence is at a particular time alone and not at all times. When these sense of limitations are inquired upon and are realized to be an error then this sense of limitation drops and the same 'T' is seen to be free from limitations of time and space than this very 'T' is referred to as the Paramatma. Param means that

which is free from all limitations of time, space and objectivity i.e. that which is there at all times, all places and in all objects. Thus the word Atma which is the common denominator in both these words shows that God is always realized as the very subjective essence of a person and not as some objective reality. The science which facilitates us to conduct this inquiry into the self is Vedanta, the culmination of which is in the discovery of oneself to be free from all limitations. That person alone is said to have attained proper spiritual health, the person alone makes the best of his or her life, rest are comparable to a sick man, always seeking and seeking and at the end of it all dying also with all the sense of limitations. They know not the joy and potential of human life. They have missed the boat.

4.4 Significance of Humanism and Universal Brotherhood

The aim of higher religion is to transform and guide man's inner and outer life. Professor Whitehead rightly says, that religion is 'a system of general truth which have the effect of transforming character when they are sincerely held and vividly apprehended".

The religion of Islam teaches respect for man, and this is the true spirit of religion. To Rumi, man is the roof of creation. The soul of man is divine, it originates from God, as discussed before. He is vicegerent of God on earth and a dignified being.

Rumi believes in the unity of equality of all human beings.

در معنی قسمت و اعداد نیست

در معنی تجزیه و افراد نیست

منبسط بودیم و یک جوهر همه

بی سور بی پا بدیم آن سر همه

یک گوهر بودیم همچو آفتاب

بی گره بودیم و صافی همچو آب

چون بصورت آمد آن نور سره

شد عدد چون سایه‌ای کنگره

کنگره ویران کنید از منجنيق

تا رود فرق از میان این رفیق^۱

In things spiritual there is no division and no numbers, in things spiritual there is no partition and no individuals.

Simple were we and all one substance; we were all without head and without foot yonder. We were one substance, like the sun, we were knotless and oure, like water. When that goodly Light took from, it became (many in) number like the shadows of a battlement.

Rase ye the battlement with the manjaniq (mangonel), that difference may vanish from amidst this company of (shadows).

چون از ایشان مجتمع بینی دو یار

هم یکی باشند و هم ششصد هزار^۲

"when you see two of them met together as friends, they are one, and at the same time (they are) six hundred thousand.

Their numbers are in the likeness of waves: the wind will have brought them into number (into plurality from unity).

The Sun, which is the spirits, became separated (broken into rays) in the windows, which are bodies.

1. Rumi Mathnawi, ii, 681

2. ibid, ii, 184-189

When you gaze on the Sun's disk, it is itself one, but that is screened by (his perception of) the bodies is in some doubt.

Separation (plurality) is in the animal spirit; the human spirit is one essence.

Inasmuch as God sprinkled His light upon them (mankind), (they are essentially one): His light never becomes separated (in reality).

To Rumi reality is one. It is only the perception of an isolated aspect of Reality which awfully divides people. In this connection he relates the story of a persian, a Turk, an Arab, uzum, inab and istafil respectively. They quarreled with one another, each considering himself to be right. But they meant the same thing under different names. It was due to sheer ignorance that they quarreled.¹

Rumi has great respect for all prophets. Hence his regard is for all the followers of all religions. To him all the prophets reflected the Light of God in different ways.

ده چراغ ار حاضر آيد در مکان

هر يكى باشد بصورت غير آن

فرق نتوان کرد نور هر يكى

2 چون بنورش روبي آري بي شكى

1. Rumi Mathnawi, p.678

2. ibid, p. 679

"If ten lamps are present in (one) place, each differs in form from another:

To distinguish without any doubt the light of each, when you turn your face towards their light is impossible,"

The influence of the Quran that "we do not make a distinction between one prophet and the other,' is obvious.

It was because of this regard and respect that he was loved by all the people of his time. Rumi's biographers relate that at the death of Rumi, a Christian, from among the mourners from different creeds, replied to a question: "We esteem him as the Moses, the David, the Jesus of our time: and we are his disciples, his adherents.¹ This was really a great tribute ever made to the catholicity of a great man.

Rumi is, thus, well known for his religious tolerance. Dr. Nicholson has rightly determined the place of Rumi by comparing him with Dante. He says," Jalaluddin died a few years after the birth of Dante, but the Christian poet falls far below the level of charity and tolerance reached by his Muslim contemporary.²

Islam fosters a true respect for humanity. Islam believes in the unity and equality of all human beings. The Quran says that mankind is a single nation and that "Men is division into tribes and families and the diversity of their tongues and colours

1. F.Hadland Davis, The Persian Mystics, Jalal-ud-Din Rumi, p.34

2. R.A. Nicholson, The Mystics of Islam, p.100.

have nothing to do with their superiority or inferiority". The superiority is only due to good deeds. The Quran bestows great respect on human life irrespective of creed, colour, race and speech. It says, "(O mankind) surely we have created you from a male and a female and made your tribes and families that you may know each other. Surely the noblest of you with Allah is the most dutiful of you. To Allah all human life is precious. The Quran says, "That whatsoever kills a person, unless it be for manslaughter or for mischief in the land, it is as though he had saved the lives of all men."

Significance of Humanism and Universal Brotherhood (Kabir)

Kabir provides us with a code of ethics. He condemned ethics and selfishness. One should cultivate the quality of humility. Kabir was a spokesman for the poor and downtrodden section of the society. He condemned the sense of humility and simplicity of the poor, and condemned the vanity and pride of the rich. By such condemnation, Kabir preached the common brotherhood of man. He observed:

Nobody respecteth the poor man;

He may make hundreds of thousands of efforts

But no one will heed him.

If a poor man go to a rich man, the latter,

Through opposite him, will turn his back,

If a rich man go to a poor man,

The later respecteth, yea, inviteth him,

Yet the poor man and the rich man are brothers,

He thought that the economic inequality was

Due to one's own actions, He says:

To one man Goth given silks and

Satins and a niwar bed,

Others have not even raged coat or

Draw in their houses to lie on.

Indulged not in envy and bickering, O my soul,

Do good deeds and gain their reward.¹

The above mentioned hymn repeatedly refers to the dignity of labour, on value of work and vocation. One should not earn only to hoard. Kabir spurned the miser. At the time of departure from this earth he cannot take any thing, even Longoti is removed from his body. Hoarding is despised by him, because "hands closed he comes and Hands open he goes. King like Bali, Vikramaditya, Bhoje and are witness of the fact. He advised the rich to be generous and benevolent to the needy. This earned him the title Dayal, the tender hearted.

Kabir sought to remove the distinction between Hindus and the Muslims. "He rejected" says Tara chand, "those features of Hinduism and Islam which were against this spirit; and which were of no importance for the spiritual welfare of the individual." Kabir believed in the unity

Like other sufis, Humanism is the soul of Kabir's poetry. To him human being is precious. Hence he should overcome the religious and social disturbances and of Hindus and Muslims.

1 . Society and Culture in the Medieval India, by A. Rashid, p.248

restlessness. The following verse of Kabir is considered the best on this topic. He says:

Tera sayeen tujh me jiun pahun me bas
 Kasturi ka mirg jiwan phir phir dhunde ghas
 Bara hua to kiya huwa jaise ped khajur
 Panchi ko chaya nahin phal lagat itte dur

(In vain is the eminence, just like a date tree

Kabir explains the following truth in a simple way as such:

Jag men bairi koi nahin jo man sital hoi
 Us aapa ko dar de, diya kar te mohe na awat laj

Kabir preached humanism in such a way that considered the active force of it.

See the verse:

Jo tu kanta boye tahe bowo tu phul

Tu ko phul ko phul hai wa ko hai trisul

(If somebody plants thorns for you, you plant flower for him you will get back flower for flower, he a trident for thorn, be sure) 1

1.Impact on Mystical ideas and Character on the Thoughts and Poetry of Kabir (1440-1518 A.D.)

The Hindu resorts to the temple and the Mosalman to the mosque, but Kabir goes to the place where both are known. The two religions are like two brances in the middle of which there is a sprout surpassing them. Kabir has taken the higher path abandoning the customs of the two. "if you say that I am a Hindu then it is not true, nor am I a Mosalman, I am a body made of five elements where the unknown (ghabi) plays. Mekka has aerily become Kasi and Roma has become Rahim. The points of similarity as brought by kabir may be disputed by the theologians but it speaks of his genuine attempt to bride the gulf between the twi communities. He was one of the best symbols of cultural fusion. Kabir despised the frivolous distinction drawn between Kafis (infidelity) and Islam. In the contemporary Sufi circle he was regarded as a monist. He claimed to have known the secrets of the two religions, "I have examined the religious doctrines of Mohammadans and Hindus. They do not lay aside their bigotry for the sake of relish for their tongue.

The spirit of Bhakti as manifested by Ramananda and Kabir brought the eternal virtue of love of Humanity to the foreground. The main theme of kabir's social philosophy was that humanity is a sacred trust of the Almighty. He possessed a very humane outlook. Naturally, his disciples swelled in number. "But it is not Says Tara Chand," the number of his followers which is so important, it is the influence which extends to the Punjab, Gujrat and Bengal and which continued to spread under the Moghal rule, till a wise sovereign correctly estimating its value attempted to make it a religion approved by the State.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

The basic principle of mysticism is that the knowledge of reality cannot be obtained through the senses. If we are to reach reality, we must withdraw from the world of sense into that of inner experience. In order to reach the world of reality, we have to take recourse to intuitive reasons which are in fact, the attitude of the mystics: The one aim of the mystics is to disconnect themselves of this world of phenomena and to be reunited with their origin where they eternally rest.

Rumi's healthy mysticism enabled him to portray healthy sentiments which interests healthy minds in all ages and in all countries. As a poet Rumi, sought to invest the Sufi doctrine with every charm that his genius could inspire. In the words of Nicholson, "in sublimity of thought and grandeur of expression he (Maulana Rumi) challenges the greatest masters of songs; time after time he strikes a lofty note without effort; the clearness of his vision gives a wonderful exaltation of his verse, which beats against the sky; his odes throb with passion and rapture- enkindling power; and his diction is choice and inartificial."

Man occupies a supreme position on account of his unique and unparalleled nature. According to Rumi, "Only those who know how to contemplate God perfectly know the dignity of man and his place in the universe. Every individual can strive to achieve the state of perfect man. Rumi further believed that the perfect or ideal man work in cooperation with others to bring about the kingdom of heaven on earth, and he cannot exist independently of the group to which he belongs.

It has been observed that Rumi derived his inspiration from the Holy Quran, the Traditions, and the anecdotes from the life of the prophet. It is also found in the Masnavi many questions raised and possible answers to them by the earlier Islamic philosophers, such as epistemological problems of Al-Farabi (870-950 A.D.) and Ibn-i-Sina (Avicenna) (980-1037 A.D.). All this wealth of Maulana Rumi on philosophical, theological and mystical elements, unfortunately, has not been developed in a systematic way but is lying scattered. We can glean the basic elements and can come to the conclusion that the dynamic Sufism of Maulana Rumi has delivered a message of great importance which, among other theories, pertains to there epoch-making theories of philosophy.

Rumi traces the gradual evolution of the human soul and explains how from the inanimate state the soul ascended to its human form and he holds out the hope that this very human soul has the potentiality to become Divine. It can be said that Darwin's theory of is in regard to the evolution of the human body but Maulana Rumi's is with regard to the evolution of the soul which is Hindu Vedantic in outlook but also has a sanction from Islam. The eternity and the transmigration of the soul are quite evident from the verses of the Mesnavi. Rumi cared little for logical contradictions in the expression of his thoughts and sentiments. He used many contradictory, opinions current before him, as his material and conceived a new structure where the outlines and basic features are entirely his own.

Rumi's philosophy can be summed up in this way that reality is one; all phenomena are aspects of reality. All beings proceed from the Ultimate Reality, into the universe and back again to the same original source-Reality. Real knowledge

cannot be obtained through logic only; personal experience is preferred than reason alone. The real aim of life is that one should perceive Reality through spiritual experience, so that it should become one into Reality. The spiritual perception is known as Love; knowledge of Reality is inherent in Love. This love is the main spring of all religions and higher morality become more formal and mechanical. Reasons without love remain in utter darkness. According to Rumi, life is a journey back to God.

There is no phase of human activity in which Rumi does not provide us with guidance. Rumi's philosophy brings spiritual awakening, hope and cheer to humanity caught up by its own selfishness, greed, envy, jealousy, insincerity, pride and passion. Maulana Rumi prescribes the basis for human society on such spiritual considerations where colour, caste and race cease to count and every individual, irrespective of the belief he holds dear, can live with fellow beings in peace, tranquility, understanding, amity, happiness and harmony.

On the other hand there is no doubt as to the greatness of Kabir's influence as a religious teacher; he has also been described as the founder of Hindi literature. His copious utterances may be classified according to their metres, but they cannot be arranged in dates. The clues to his spiritual history are lost. He starts as a follower of Ramananda, who "drank deep of the juice of Rama." Around him he saw only the blind pushing the blind, and both falling into the well. Vehement in his protests against conventional religion, and unable to carry either its professors of learning or its ignorant commonality with him, he stood alone, and the loneliness was very grievous.

Kabir believed in self-surrender and God's bhakti. The Kabir panthis follow a little of singing, the praises of God, prayers and a simple and pure life of devotion. Kabir recommends ceaseless singing of God's praises. He virtually suggests withdrawal from the world. He is against all ritualistic and ascetic methods as means to salvation. It is true that Kabir refers to some yogic terms in describing the meditational and mystic methods of the yogis. But, there is no ground to suggest that he himself recommends the yogic path. In fact, far from recommending yoga, he is quite strong in condemning ascetic or yogic methods, and says that yogis, in their meditations, become prey to Maya. Kabir was influenced by prevailing religious mood such as old Brahmanic Hinduism, Hindu and Buddhist Tantrism, teachings of Nath yogis and the personal devotionalism from South India mixed with imageless God of Islam. The influence of these various doctrines is clearly evident in Kabir's verses, even though he is often presented to be synthesizer of Hinduism and Islam.

The basic religious principles he espouses are simple. According to Kabir, all life is interplay of two spiritual principles. One is the personal soul (Jivatma) and the other is God (Paramatma). It is Kabir's view that salvation is the process of bringing into union these two divine principles. The social and practical manifestation of Kabir's philosophy has rung through the ages. It represented a synthesis of Hindu, and Muslim concepts. From Hinduism he accepts the concept of reincarnation and the law of Karma. From Islam he takes the outer practices of Indian Sufi ascetics and Sufi mysticism. Not only has Kabir influenced Muslims and Hindus but he is one of the major inspirations behind Sikhism as well. Despite legend that claims Kabir met with Guru Nanak, their lifespan do not overlap in time. The presence of much of his verse in Sikh scripture and the fact that

Kabir was a predecessor of Nanak has led some western scholars to mistakenly describe him as a forerunner of Sikhism.

Kabir was poet of no mean order and gladly consecrated his literary gifts to the service of God. He knew that religious instruction given in the form of poetry was easily remembered; he knew too that singings of Bhajans (hymns) were an occupation in which his followers could sing. This he did and up to the present day his hymns enjoy great popularity with the people and in the Panth occupy a prominent position in all acts of public worship.

The traditional life of Kabir has a poetical beauty which in its power to commend a Muhammadan saint to Hindu followers may be thankfully regarded as a prophecy of the greater reconciliation of conflicting faiths to which so many of us look forward. The veil that has been drawn over the first beginnings of an important religious movement we would reverently raise, trusting thereby to add additional luster to the brave efforts of a distinguished champion of religious truth.

In certain respect the legendary life of Kabir presents remarkable parallels to incidents in the life of Christ. After an account of virgin birth we read that Kabir, as a boy, meets the worst in argument a learned Pandit, he criticized for associating with the outcasts of society; he miraculously supplies the poor with bread; he incurs the hostility of the religious leaders of his time; he raises from the dead boy and a girl and is ministered to by women. The full account of his appearance before Sikander Lodi presents in many details a striking resemblance to Christ's trial before Pilate.

Kabir strove for the One Truth. He described himself as the son of both Ram and Allah. The basic religious principles he espoused were simple. According to him, all life is interplay of two spiritual principles: One is the personal soul (Jivatma) and the other is God (Paramatma). It was Kabir's view that salvation is the process of bringing into union these two divine principles. The social and practical manifestation of Kabir's philosophy has rung through the ages. It represented a synthesis of Hindu and Muslim concepts. From Hinduism he accepts the concept of reincarnation and the law of Karma. From Islam he takes the affirmation of the single god and the rejection of caste system and idolatry. Not only did Kabir influence the Muslims and Hindus but he is one of the major inspirations behind Sikhism as well.

Growing closeness and unifications of the world are the most remarkable phenomena of our world of today. People of the world are coming closer proximity with the tremendous scientific development, great advancement in communication and information technology. Globalization is also inevitable. With globalization taking place, we need a new vision of the world order, a clear insight into the fundamentals of ethics and religion. A deeper understanding and appreciation of all peoples, their civilizations, their cultures especially moral and spiritual achievement is the need of the day. This is the time when East and the West need to build bridges of understanding and amity rather than talk about the "Clash of Civilizations". It is the need of the day to reach out to other civilizations and cultures. On what basis can the dialogue of civilizations take place? For this purpose, among other things,

Maulana Rumi and Sant Kabir's works, teachings and philosophy can be great source of inspiration for all people irrespective of caste and creed.

A new journey lies ahead for humanity to travel. Many men of faith will be seeking to walk along that road in the company of God and will desire to recapture in their own hearts the ecstatic joy experienced by Sufis and Sants like Maulana Rumi and Kabir to comfort them. Many will succeed in the process of forming a pattern of thought and behavior based on the vital truths of the Sufis and the Sants which will satisfy the needs of many seeking the re-establishment of moral and spiritual values. The Sufi teachings and philosophy and lessons of Maulana Rumi and Sant Kabir assume greater importance in this context.

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راهنمای
مظہر آصف

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